



BENGALI LITERATURE  
IN THE  
NINETEENTH CENTURY  
1800-1825



HISTORY  
OF  
BENGALI LITERATURE  
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY  
1800 1825

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TO  
MY FATHER



## PREFACE

—

With the object of drawing the attention of scholars to the comparatively uncultivated field of Bengali Literature, I have in the present volume embodied the results of some of my researches into it. These investigations were first undertaken in 1912-1913 chiefly for the purpose of my essay for the Griffith Memorial Prize for Original Research for 1915 and were subsequently worked up in a thesis for Premchand Roychand Research Studentship for which it was approved in 1918.

In selecting the nineteenth century for treatment out of all other periods I am actuated by several considerations. In the first place, the nineteenth century possesses a peculiar interest for us. It is the period of British influence on Indian thought and one which witnessed a new awakening and the growth and building up of modern Bengal and modern Bengali Literature. The importance of this period in all its aspects political social religious as well as literary can never be exaggerated. It is to be regretted however that we possess no adequate and connected information about the period and the literature in which indeed the civilisation of modern Bengal can be traced and without which that civilisation cannot be fully understood. I have not heard of any scholar who has yet made the nineteenth century literature his special study and written any special account of it. The earliest attempts at writing a connected account of Bengali Literature—the Bengali discourse of Rajnarayan Basu and the little pamphlet of Ganga Charan Sarkar—were meant chiefly as popular lectures rather than any comprehensive and synthetic study.

of the subject. Pundit Ramgati Nyayaratna's more considerable and painstaking work is far too hasty and too orthodox to serve as a connected and critical account, and his treatment of the nineteenth century, with which the Pundit seems to possess but little sympathy, is meagre and hasty. Mahamahopadhyay Hariprasad Shastri's fruitful researches in the field of early Bengali Literature is well-known, but it is to be regretted that the learned scholar did not direct his investigation to comparatively modern periods except by way of contributing a suggestive survey of the nineteenth century literature in the old series of the *Bangalaksan*. It is needless to mention other subsequent works like those of Padmanabha Ghosal, Mahendra Nath Bhattacharjee, Kailas Chandra Ghose, Ramesh Chandra Dutt and others, for researches in the field or at least accumulation of materials have necessarily made great strides in the thirty or forty years which have elapsed since their publication. The most recent treatment of the subject is to be found in Babu Dinesh Chandra Sen's newly published *History of Bengali Literature*, but it must be admitted that the learned author's account of the nineteenth century, which is dealt with only partially and which possibly did not come within the scope of his lucid lectures, is tacked on as a sort of appendix to his more valuable work on the earlier periods and, based as it is chiefly on the doubtful authority of Rev. J. Long's *Catalogue*, it is in itself a hardly satisfactory study of the schools and leaders of this important era of Bengali Literature. It is remarkable indeed that recent investigations and researches in this field are directed more towards ancient Bengali Literature than towards its more modern phases. This apparent want of interest in a very noteworthy period must not, however, lead one to underrate its importance. It is true that the period of European writers in Bengali is not very acceptable

to a mere literary taster but even in this seemingly dullest period of our literary history there is much more than is ever dreamt of in the philosophy of the airy generaliser who hurries over it to pastures more agreeable. It is the silent but strenuous efforts of the hosts of forgotten or half forgotten writers both foreign and native, of this and later periods that have built up the whole fabric upon which the present-day literature is based but it has always been the misfortune of the worthy pioneer authors to be kept in the background and looked upon as notable curiosities. It is time however when their records are fast vanishing and in a few years will be irretrievably lost, that we must hasten to estimate their work and worth, reconstruct their history, and give them their respective share of credit in the growth and progress of the national mind.

Being thus without a competent guide in the field but convinced of the importance of the work I have been obliged to chalk out my own path. The purpose and scope of the present volume will be rendered plainer by a glance through the book itself than I could hope to make it here except by way of anticipating what will be found in the following chapters. I may briefly add however that my object has been to give, from a literary point of view but with a background of social and political history, and from a direct reading of the literature itself an account of the important period in which, indeed the obscure origins of modern Bengali Literature is to be sought making it as full and as conveniently arranged as I could provide. The volume must not be regarded however, as a mere storehouse of facts and although presented as an essay of literary and biographical criticism it may also be taken as an historical review of the course of Bengali Literature from its decadence after Bhārat Chandra's death to its

rejuvenation under the British influence—if not a minute, at least a compact and logical survey of the authors and works that demand attention. It would be too late in the day surely to insist upon the historical method of study of literature but it has never been systematically and consistently applied to the investigation of modern Bengali Literature

I am indeed aware that “the historical estimate” has its perils and snares and more than often results in strange freaks and that the discoverer of some forgotten minor writer is often under the temptation to magnify the value of his discovery, yet in applying the historical method in literary criticism I am following what is widely accepted by all philosophical critics. It is indeed the best way to attain that “disinterested objectivity” in criticism which Matthew Arnold so highly applauds and to avoid that “provincial spirit” which he rightly condemns. It must not be supposed, however, that I have substituted bird’s eye views and sweeping generalisations for positive knowledge. The chain of historical summary can never be forged without the links supplied by individual facts. Nor, on the other hand, should it be supposed that I have a peculiar theory of my own or any particular school to uphold. Not a single sketch has been discoloured nor the comprehension of the general drift distorted by my own ideas. On the other hand, each author has been judged on his own merits and in order to obtain a true historical perspective, I have treated literature not as an isolated phenomenon but have taken care always to keep in view the relation of the literature to the social and political history of the time, for literary thought and contemporary events, as I have pointed out elsewhere, are indeed the two inseparable aspects of history. The task of such a reconstruction is by no means easy and one can

never claim infallibility or finality in a matter like this. To make a proper estimate of modern literature is indeed one of the most difficult tasks of literary criticism. An old country and its old literature is a study; but a new country and its new literature is a problem. It is hard to realise the past but it is harder to read the present. All that this work can lay claim to is that a systematic though tentative attempt is made to study a progressive literature during a most noteworthy period in all its remarkable phases reflecting the thought and culture of the specified country and age.

But the following pages form only the first volume of my projected history of the 19th century literature. It deals with a very small part of the subject and with a seemingly barren and uninteresting period between 1800 and 1825. This is concerned in the main with the well meaning but scarcely literary activity of the European writers chiefly missionaries and their colleagues in the domain of Bengal prose as well as with the strong counter current of native energy which found its vent in a body of indigenous poems and songs, standing as they do in direct contrast to the work of the Europeans. The Introductory Retrospect is a brief preliminary recapitulation of the facts and circumstances which led to the beginnings of the modern age and modern literature. It should be taken as an introduction not only to the present volume but also to the volumes which will follow. To many, minutely conversant with the history of this period the account would seem to be inadequate while to others, interested directly in the literature itself it would seem disproportionately long and dry. It is extremely difficult, indeed, to hit happily upon the golden mean between brevity and prolixity yet the necessity of such a retrospect must be admitted. It was not within my province



to give more than a mere rapid sketch of the history of the period in all its varied aspects but only with reference to its bearings upon literature, although volumes may be and have been written on their difficult and vast subject. I have not hesitated to draw very considerably upon what has already been written on it and indeed I have drawn so considerably that it is not possible to acknowledge my indebtedness in all cases except by way of a general reference in the bibliography. The recognised historians of this period of Indian History, I may be permitted to add, have divergent methods and view-points. Auber is complacent, Mill querulous, Thornton vindictive, Ghulam Hosain exuberant, Macaulay sweeping and Romesh Dutt vehement, but the steadily accumulating mass of materials, in the shape of reports, pamphlets, bluebooks, state-papers and other documents would give to a patient scholar enough material for a thorough, sober, and I must add, imperatively necessary reconstruction of this period. The account of the European writers, which follow this introductory sketch, is made as full and accurate as materials at my disposal would allow, for never has full justice been done to these worthy pioneers who have been allowed to pass silently into oblivion. The average reader knows no other names than those of Carey and Marshman but the interesting group of writers, great and small, who surrounded or preceded these great names and added their little mite to the cause, are also worthy of grateful remembrance. They are, therefore, presented here as reputable and fairly interesting persons and not as unrepresentable progenitors always to be kept in the background. The early missionary movements in Bengal are studied for the first time from original sources with reference to their bearing on Bengali language and literature and some pains are taken to trace the rather obscure

and neglected history of the early Roman Catholic missions to Bengal and their connexion with Bengali. The account of the Kabiwalas and other indigenous writers could not be made as full and well arranged as I had desired for the materials and means of study are extremely scanty and unsatisfactory. I am still engaged upon this investigation and am collecting materials for fuller treatment. In the mean time what is presented here must be taken as merely tentative.

The large number of quotations from various works scattered throughout the volume, no doubt swells it to an enormous length but I could not always control the length of these illustrative extracts. For each quotation in order to be illustrative, must be presented as complete in itself. Scraps and fragments and stray passages are not always helpful. In the next place the comparative scarcity of the books from which such passages are taken will, it is hoped, be an ample apology for their length and frequency. When the history will come down to more recent times the quotations will naturally become fewer for one may then depend on the reader's means of acquaintance with the literature of his time. In these quotations I have carefully preserved the spelling and punctuation of the original texts with which in all cases I have minutely compared and verified them. It will be also noticed that I have refrained from giving any translation of these Bengali extracts for the simple reason that no translation could have adequately conveyed the spirit of the original and that the real importance of these writers lie not so much in their matter as in their form and method of expression which mere translation can never reproduce.

As to chronology and classification, it is better to make a preliminary remark. Controlling dates and names,

although necessary and useful if kept within bounds, are intended merely as artifices of classification, for a better understanding of the general drift. There can be no hard-and-fast limits as encompassing an epoch, and history must unfold itself without any preconceived notion of artificial dates and eras. It is for this reason that in the present volume, the activity of the European writers has been traced for a certain unity of treatment down to the fifties, although after 1825 their influence was on the wane, and other movements were becoming prominent. On the other hand, I have thought it simpler to defer an enquiry into the first glimmerings of the struggle between Anglicism and Orientalism and the history of English education in its bearing on Bengali literature as well as the account of the rise of the Reforming Young Bengal under the leadership of David Hare, Derozio and others to the beginning of a separate volume, instead of dealing with them piecemeal at the end of the present essay. Some of the works of Rājū Rām Mohan Rāy and his colleagues belong chronologically to this period, but from the standpoint of literary history, they embody a subsidiary movement which comes into relief a little later, and are, therefore, deliberately reserved for later treatment. Without therefore disturbing in the least the true historical perspective, I have never attempted to force an account of any movement, literary or otherwise, into strict chronological shackles, but I have sometimes boldly looked forward while at others paused for a profitable retrospect, always bearing in mind that the natural course of events seldom takes as smooth and orderly development as we may desire.

With regard to transliteration of Bengali words, I have generally followed, with the exceptions noted below, the international method agreed upon by Orientalists for Sanscrit. In some cases where the name of a place or a

person has got a standardised spelling (as in Chinsurah, Howrah, and Burdwan), I have thought it fit to retain it but in all other cases the transliteration is done in the mode indicated with the only exception of using *cha* for চ. The words are however, always rendered not phonetically, but according to the recognised spelling although widest possible divergence exists between the historical spelling and the actual pronunciation of Bengali words. I have therefore always rendered য by *ya* whether occurring singly or in compound letter ঞ by *ña* distinguishing them respectively, although they are not so distinguished in pronunciation from জ (*ja*) and ন (*na*). Similarly the three consonants ঞ, ঞ and ঞ are distinguished by different signs (ঙ, ঞ and ঞ) although they are not often thus discriminated in pronunciation. The same remark applies to compound letters. I have rendered ক as in Sanscrit, ক by *kā* ঞ by *ña* and so forth. Partly on account of this divergence between spelling and pronunciation which makes it impossible to apply Sanscrit transliteration in toto to the case of the living vernacular I have been forced to make one or two important exceptions. I have not distinguished between র (*ra*) and ঙ (*ḍa*) for this distinction is hardly recognised in Bengali either in spelling or pronunciation. I have therefore used *ḍa* indiscriminately for them. The final ঞ (*a*) presents some difficulty for very often it is passed over in pronunciation. We write ঞীলদর্পণ (Nīla-darpana) but we read it as ঞীলদর্পণ (Nīl-darpan). In these cases, I have generally dropped the ঞ (*a*). This on the whole is not a very satisfactory method but in the absence of a better one I have tentatively followed it here leaving the whole question which is indeed one of great practical importance to the consideration of expert scholars.

In the task of collecting materials for the present volume, I have met with considerable difficulties known

only to workers in the same field. Although not more than a century has elapsed, the publications passed in review have already become very scarce and have seldom been satisfactorily reprinted, and in search of them, I had to ransack many libraries, great and small, departmental, public, and private, in Calcutta and outside, to which I could get access. Much of these interesting publications of the early nineteenth century is unhappily lost, much, unless we hasten to the rescue, is fast vanishing, while much, again, is scattered all over the country finding its way ultimately among many heterogeneous collections, public and private. No complete history can ever be hoped for, till all these old publications and files, more or less complete, of old news-papers have been disinterred. There is not a single news-paper office in Calcutta and Calcutta is a fair example of the country in this matter that possesses a complete file of its own issue not a single library, public or private, which contains even the more important Bengali publications of the first half of the century. However interesting and useful stray extracts or stray passages from these papers or publications may be, it is utterly impossible to write the history of this or any other period of the country's progress, political, social, or literary, as fully as could be done if these and other things had been carefully preserved or collected together. But in view of the fact that even what is now extant may in the course of a few years be irretrievably lost, it is time that we must seriously think of constructing a general view of the period out of the materials which still remain to us.

The writer of this thesis, however, has been successful in having access to most of the important publications he has dealt with. For the privilege of reading and examining large number of books passed in review only a trifling percentage of those mentioned was inaccessible to him.

and it was necessary to examine many that proved to be unworthy of mention—I have to thank the authorities of many libraries in or near Calcutta. I had expected to find a good collection of Bengali publications preserved in the Serampore College Library but besides a few relics of the venerable old Carey, various missionary tracts, a nice collection of books pertaining to the history of the missionary movements in India and a few old files of the *Friend of India* and other Christian papers I could discover nothing else of any interest. Through the kind interest of a friend who was residing in England at the time when this book was in hand and who at my request transcribed books and details for him, I had access though not to the extent I had desired to the benefit of the collection in the Library of the British Museum and of the India Office, with regard to both of which I had also invaluable help from Blumhardt's descriptive Catalogues. But my chief indebtedness is to the Library of the Board of Examiners, late Fort William College, from which all the Bengali publications of that College had been procured for me by the authorities of the Imperial Library of Calcutta. My thanks are also due in this connexion to the late Mr W E Madge formerly Superintendent of the Reading Room in this Library and to Mr Surendranath Kumar his successor to the same office for their interest in my work and for uniform courtesy and kindness shown to me during the time I studied there. I must also thank the authorities of the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat for permitting me to make ample use of its fine collection of Bengali books and manuscripts. My special thanks in this respect are due to Babu Basantaranjan Ray keeper of these manuscripts for kindly giving me all facilities for using them and also for placing at my disposal his expert knowledge in this matter. He never

grudged to render me help whenever I required it and also very kindly undertook to compare and verify the quotations cited from these manuscripts in the Appendix to this volume. I should also take this opportunity of associating this insignificant work with the honoured name of the late lamented Principal Ramendrasundar Tribedi, who was, in more than a metaphorical sense, the life and soul of the Sāhitya Parisat. His recent and untimely death is mourned all over Bengal and there is no need for prolix panegyrics in the case of one who is so widely known by his life and work, but I cannot remain satisfied without giving voice to my sense of indebtedness and esteem for one to whom I am grateful in many ways and without expressing my personal regret that I could not show him these pages, in which he took so much interest, in print. To the ripe and varied scholarship of Mahamahopadhyay Haraprasad Shastri, I am deeply indebted in diverse ways, for I was always allowed to draw liberally upon it, and his contagious enthusiasm for Bengali language and literature has been a source of unfailing inspiration to me.

Among other friends and scholars who kindly helped me in various ways, my thanks are specially due to my friend and colleague Professor Rameshchandra Mazumdar M A, Ph.D for steady encouragement, for valuable suggestions and for procuring me some rare books from the Library of the Bengal Asiatic Society. I may be allowed to note here that Dr Mazumdar first drew my attention to the only extant copy in that Library of Manoel de Assumpção's *Crepas Xantias Oithibhed*, one of the earliest printed books written by a Portuguese missionary. To another friend and colleague, Professor Sumitkumar Chatterji M A, I am indebted for help in various ways and specially for getting me a copy of Father Guérin's edition of the work referred to above from Father Wauters of Dharmatalla.

Church, and I must thank Professor Narayanchandra Banerjee M.A. of the University for a copy of *Gopī-ratnoddhār* which I could not get here and which he procured for me very promptly from Benares. My friend Babu Mohitlal Mazumdar very kindly and carefully prepared an index to this volume which for shortness of time could not be printed in this volume. I must also acknowledge obligations to the Staff of the Calcutta University Press for prompt assistance and unfailing courtesy in getting these pages in print in a remarkably short time. To them and to all others who have helped me by lending books by giving facilities for research and in other ways, it is a pleasure to return my heartiest thanks.

I cannot conclude without availing myself here of the privilege of expressing my deep sense of obligation to Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyaya who has been at the helm of this University for many years past and would be let us hope, for many years to come. It is not necessary to dwell upon his undoubted titles to our gratitude esteem and love, or upon the roll of his varied services, not yet closed in the cause of University education in Bengal for every one connected with the University or standing outside, is well aware of his long and unstinted devotion to the interests of the country and of the high sense of duty which impels him to scorn delights and live laborious days not for riches or honours place or power nor even for such fame as grows on mortal soil. But I may be permitted to refer in this connexion to his brilliant and fruitful efforts which have at last obtained academic recognition for the neglected vernacular languages and literatures of India and to acknowledge the magnificent inducement, now made possible by him for the scientific study of those languages and literatures. It is his inspiration which dispelled all my doubts about the necessity



of a work like this and it is his generous encouragement which has made possible its publication

I am fully aware that this essay is not free from errors and defects. In a field where workers are few and encouragement, until quite recently, very little, one has to work under considerable difficulties and disadvantages and nothing would be more welcome than sympathy and co-operation. With the progress of investigation in the field, new facts are bound to come to light every day, and even of the facts that have already been known we can never pretend that he has taken them all into consideration. All suggestions for improvement and correction therefore would be thankfully received. There are a few obvious misprints and mistakes which, in spite of my best efforts, the necessity of quick publication could not avoid and for which I crave the indulgence of the generous reader. The exceedingly short time within which the book had to be rushed through the press did not allow me in all cases to verify the references given in the footnotes and in some cases the books, though easily procurable at the time of writing this essay, had now become difficult of access and for these I had to depend entirely upon the notes I had previously made. These shortcomings, however, let me trust, are not material. In conclusion I can only hope that the volume contains enough to justify its publication in the present form.

SEAL HOUSE }  
 10, July 17, 1919 } SUSHIL KUMAR DE

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# BENGALI LITERATURE

## IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

### CHAPTER I

#### DIVISION OF SUBJECT

The literature produced since the permanence of the British rule in Bengal which is often conveniently described as modern literature has a character

The literature why called modern"

of its own at once brilliant, diverse and complex. To label it in a phrase

is not only difficult but often misleading for never was there a literature more memorable for its rapid development and its copious and versatile gifts. It can to-day boast of many characteristics and the central note is lost in the extreme diversity of forms and tendencies exhibited. It is full of vitality versatility and diligence critical and cultured intensely personal and self regulated apparently defiant of all laws of standards of conventions yet a little

The character of modern Bengali literature essentially different in its form and motive from its pre-British fore-runner

reflection will show that in spite of this diversity of styles and motives this epoch has a character which differentiates it from any other era of Bengali literature. Can we imagine

*Kṛṣṇakāntar Uṣ* being published in the age of *Bidyūpati* or *Nil-darpaṇ* in that of *Bhārat-chandra*?

How different are the problems of life and character which Kabikankan paints from those we see reflected in the pages of Rabīndranāth! What a new world is that of Michael, Hem, or Nabīn beside that revealed to us by Bijay, Ksemānanda, or Rām-prasād! What wholly different types, ideas, and aims! It may not be easy to indicate what these characteristic differences are, but there can be no doubt that our age, although presenting, as it does, instances of a dozen different styles, certainly possesses its own unmistakable *zeitgeist* in phraseology

Hence the necessity of a separate treatment in spite of historic continuity

and substance which distinguishes it from all other ages. What these characteristic points of difference are we shall see clearly as we proceed in our study of the literature itself, but at the outset it must be admitted that modern Bengali literature, as such, has surely a claim for treatment peculiarly suited to itself

But it would be a difficult problem in social dynamics to fix any thing like an exact date for this change in the tone of the literature or to trace it back to its social

The starting point

causes. Broadly speaking, our literature began, no doubt, with the permanence of the British rule and the spread of western ideas, but these events cover almost a century from 1757 to 1857. The death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760, only three years after Plassey, in which we reach a political and

The dates usually and generally accepted are 1760 and 1858, but both seem arbitrary

social cause of the great change, is often taken as the typical date, but it might also be contended that the death of Īśvarī Gupta in 1858 marks the end of the most effective note in the older current of literature and the beginning of the new era. Yet both these dates, it is obvious, are purely arbitrary points. For the modern tone in literature can hardly be detected in any

thing written after 1700 till almost half a century elapses on the other hand the growth of this new trend in literature may be detected some half a century earlier than 1858 and Işvar Gupta himself is not wholly free from the new influence. If an approximate date is necessary it is to be found somewhere in the first quarter of the 19th century and the year 1800 is usually and may be roughly taken to be the starting point. But it must be borne in mind that such approximation of a date is intended more or less merely to facilitate classification. Some misguided critic has been induced to baptise this era of literature as the Victorian age. Such a nomenclature is not only mistaken but also misleading for as put by a well known critic of the present day 'neither reigns nor years nor centuries nor any arbitrary measure of time in the gradual evolution of thought can be exactly applied or have any formative influence. A period of so many years having some well known name by which it can be labelled is a mere artifice of classification'.<sup>1</sup> Subject to this caution however we may safely take 1800 to be the starting point in the new era of Bengali literature.

No exact date can be fixed; but 1800 A.D. may be taken as the approximate one.

But the historian of literature cannot, however overlook the long dead-season for fifty years which preceded the year 1800 for although in this period we have scanty literature yet work of another kind was being accomplished in these apparently barren years. From the battle of Plassey to the beginning of the 19th

Yet we are bound to take account of the most eventful period between 1700 and 1800; and the period 1800-1858, though not rich in actual production, is yet its formative stage and its importance can not be ignored.

overlook the long dead-season for fifty years which preceded the year 1800 for although in this period we have scanty literature yet work of another kind was being accomplished in these apparently barren years. From the battle of Plassey to the beginning of the 19th

century, mighty revolutions were occurring not only in the political and the social but also in the literary history of Bengal. In an historical study of literature, the far-reaching significance of these years cannot surely be ignored. On the other hand, although the first half of the 19th century till 1858 is comparatively barren from a strictly literary point of view, yet this was the formative period of modern literature, and the early devoted labours of the various philanthropic Europeans and Indians, whose memory is still cherished by grateful Bengalis, had sown the seeds which, when the time came, broke into the rich and lovely after-growths of modern times.

We, therefore, propose, taking 1800 A D to be roughly the year of commencement, to discuss

Division into periods  
(i) Introductory Re-  
trospect, 1760 1800

and decide, first of all, by way of introduction, the question of origins, with a preliminary recapitulation of

the causes and circumstances, political, social, and literary which led to the beginning of modern literature. This will involve a cursory review of the period between 1757 (or 1760) and 1800 in its various aspects, and its bearing upon literature. From 1800, the year of the foundation

(ii) Beginnings  
1800 1825

of the Fort William College and the formation of the Śrīnāmpur Mission, to 1825, the year of the publication

of the last volume of Carey's *Dictionary* and the laying of the foundation-stone of the Hindu College, we have a period of very great importance in our literature from an historical rather than a literary point of view for we are concerned here with the early beginnings of our literature, with the labours of the Missionaries and the Civilians, and with the early efforts, public and private, for the spread of British education in Bengal. From 1825 to

1858, the year of the death of Īśvar Gupta and the first appearance of Michael's dramas

(iii) Transition.  
1825-1859

followed within five years by the publication of *Tilottanā*, *Nil-darpan* and

*Durgēś nandini* we are in a transitional period of great ferment on every side during which the country awakened to new energies was struggling to break fresh ground by assimilating the wealth of new ideas now brought before it. All the greatest strifes social, religious and literary were fought, though not completely won during this period of awakened activity. The problem of English education now decisively settled the triumph of the West was fully proclaimed and the literature as well as the society in trying to adjust itself to this new order of things began to take a distinctly new tone and colour. This was the era of the Reforming Young Bengal. The various plentiful but inferior literature produced during these years in which new experiments were tried new veins of thought opened a new public and a new order of writers created prepared the way for the great flood tide which began with 1858. From the latter date we have a third epoch of great fertility

(iv) Revolution.  
1858-1904

brilliant achievement and high promise during which all the older

ideas of life and literature were being revolutionised and transmuted into things better suited to the needs of the new era. The Literary Young Bengal came to take the lead.

Our enquiry in the following pages will be chiefly confined to the tracing of the origins to the well meant but scarcely fruitful activity of pioneer authors who range over a seemingly dull and barren period at the commencement of our literary history. We need not lament, however that at the beginning of our acquaintance we do



not see our literature at its best, that we are not introduced at once to a Homer. We have, it is true, to plod wearily through a mass of indifferent writings whose charm, if any, seems to have long palled, before we come to a single good writer of importance, but it is well that we should do so. It enables us to examine the foundations more critically and get the parts of history into true proportion and connection. We are apt to pass lightly over the early beginnings of literary history as a stage that we have outgrown and lay greater stress upon periods more engaging but no theory is more inaccurate or insufficient than that which despises the historic estimate and bids us look only to the 'best' or the 'principal' things. In an era of evolutionary philosophy, it would be idle to investigate any manifestation of the spirit of nature or of man apart from its origin and growth. We can not despise the barbarian for the civilised man, as Hume perhaps would have done, for to the student of modern sociology, the barbarian becomes important in his organic relation to the civilised man, and the whole "social series," to quote a phrase of Mill's, must be studied step by step through the various stages of development. No more can the historian of literature ignore the rude unshaped fairago of writings which always precedes the literature of a finer stuff, for the one can never be studied intelligently without the help of the other. The literature, therefore, which is represented, in poetry and in prose, by the great names of Michael and Bankim, must be studied in the light of the no-literature that is represented by the lesser names of Carey and Mrtyunjay. It is no waste of time to trace step by step the way in which we have laid the foundations of a national literature which, if not rich in present accomplishment, is radiant with the promise of the future.



of undying military renown, was not directly productive of any fresh privilege to the English power, nor did it, in itself, affect the political destiny of

Position of the English in Bengal in the middle of the 18th century

the country Clive himself did not perhaps know what he had won, although later on his tendency to exaggerate the value of his services led him to magnify his achievements, nor did the servants of the Company, at that time, attach much importance to this incident, still less were they aware of any definite act of conquest usually associated with this battle "The general idea" writes Luke Sraffton, who had intimate knowledge of the English affairs in 1757, "at this time entertained by the servants of the Company was that the battle of Plassey did only restore us to the same situation we were in before the capture of Calcutta, the Subah was conceived to be as independent as ever, and the English returned into their commercial character"<sup>1</sup> No fresh commercial privileges were asked of Mir Jā'far nor were any wanted by the Company who were content with the terms granted to them in 1716<sup>2</sup> As yet there was hardly any important acquisition of territory by the Company who, more mindful of their commercial interests than anything else, chose to seek umbrage under the shadow of the Mohammedan power, itself declining Even in 1765, Clive flattered himself that he had "revived the power of the Great Mughal,"<sup>3</sup> and for a long time after Plassey,

<sup>1</sup> Luke Sraffton, *Observations on Mr Vansittart's Narrative*, p 2

<sup>2</sup> Vansittart, *A Narrative of the Transactions in Bengal*, vol 1, p 24 The treaty with Mir Jā'far is given in Archison, *Collection of Treaties etc* Vol I, p 186, also Verelst, *View of the Rise and Progress etc of English Government of Bengal*, p 143 44

<sup>3</sup> Letter of the Governor and Select Committee to the Court Sep 30, 1765, quoted in Firminger, *op cit*, p viii

whatever territory the Company held it held not on terms of military conquest but as a grant from a superior Mohammedan power. There was no doubt, a fiction involved in all these proceedings—a masquerade as Clive chose to describe it—yet the English at this time held ground in Bengal chiefly as trader and secondarily as revenue-collector under the Mogul Emperor. The term 'British Empire in India' obtained currency from its first bold use in 1772 by Warren Hastings, who for the first time disclosed a deeper sense of the responsibilities of empire but the possession of the sovereign rights by the Nawab was still recognised and the long debate<sup>1</sup> vehemently carried on in the Court and on the Council Board on the question of sovereignty in Bengal would go to show how little the English trading company at this time was conscious of any conquest of the country by its military power and how greatly it was conscious of the instability of its own footing.

But though Plassey cannot be directly credited to have brought into being the British empire in Bengal yet the great empire of the Mogul and its subahdār ship in Bengal were gradually breaking down. The period between 1757 and 1765 witnessed also the down fall of the French commercial settlements which left Bengal

open to the English. In spite of these and other opportunities it took nearly half a century however, for the British rule to establish

Commerce then as a dominating factor in the Company's policy

itself firmly in Bengal. One of the chief reasons for this was that during these years commercialism was the dominating factor in the policy of the Directors of the Company and it was by slow degrees that they departed from their original commercial position. About

time of Clive's second mission, no doubt, a schism in the Court of Directors which heralded a momentous change in the character of the Company. One party was for trade alone, the other supported Clive's proposal to accept the Dewānī and thus incur the responsibility of government. In 1761, the Court wrote its agents in India, declaring that trade was to be combined with "warfare, fortification, military prudence, and political government."<sup>1</sup> But this military precaution was urged chiefly for the protection of trade and, although the break-up of the Mohammedan rule was beginning to offer the opportunities to the trader to become a soldier and a vastacian, the Court always insisted upon an attitude of non-intervention and peremptorily disapproved, on more than one occasion, the intention of its agents for territorial acquisition when such a step did not also extend their acquisitions and profits.<sup>2</sup>

It was by slow degrees, therefore, that the company of trading shop-keepers turned into earnest empire-builders.

Gradually they began to acquire land and gradual zemindary rights, monopolise revenue, assume civil control, and step by step exclude the Mohammedan

government by destroying its financial and military supremacy. This long process of gradually exhausting and appropriating the functions of the existing government, which, however, meant, as it did, half a century of misery to the people, first began with the grant of the districts of Burdwan, Midnapur, and Chittagong in 1760. These necessities of revenue administration compelled the Company to build up a system of internal government.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in F. P. Robinson, *The Trade of the East India Company*, 57.

<sup>2</sup> Esp. Letter to Bengal, March 16, 1768, quoted in Auber, *Rise and Progress etc.* vol. II, p. 185.

and consolidate its military power, but it was not till the grant of the Dewānī in 1765 that it began to obtain a complete control over finance over the administration of

civil justice and over the entire

Accession to the  
Dewānī.

military defence of the country

The accession to the Dewānī which

however was declined by the Directors

on a former occasion imposed upon the British traders the duties of administration. They began to exercise every prerogative of the sovereign save that of criminal justice<sup>1</sup>. But even then though real masters of the country

they preferred to wear the mask of double government. By this device to all the abuses of the ancient system of government were superadded all the evils of a new

system of divided authority. The

State of Bengal under  
the Double Govern-  
ment.

people grew uncertain as to where his obedience was due<sup>2</sup>. The Nawāb

though theoretically left in his full

glory as subahdār was in the language of Clive "a shadow and a name" and was deprived of every independent military and financial support of his executive.

The Hon'ble Company, on the other hand though actual sovereigns pretended to be nothing more than mere passive receivers of profits and revenues, and the shadow of the Nawāb was a convenient covering for all their acts of exaction and oppression. The country was placed under extensive misrule. The individual British adventurer in the service of the Company brought up since the days of Clive in the tradition of aggression, dethronement, spoliation and extortion considered high handed proceedings as his time-honoured privilege grown out of the anomalous way in which the British power came into being. These

servants of the Company, abroad with a nominal salary, were coming home laden with such colossal fortune, often acquired with no clean hand, that the 'Indian Nabob' became a scandalously proverbial term. Every vice which is the offspring of unlimited authority and insatiable avarice, flourished unchecked. The papers relating to the conduct of the Company's servants and their dealings on the whole question of internal trade, of receiving presents, and other corrupt and pernicious practices, remain as an indelible blot in the early records of the Company's history.<sup>1</sup>

It is not easy to imagine today what suffering this meant to the country. The anarchical state in which the provinces were placed not only contributed powerfully to its impoverishment but it absolutely dissolved the government of the country so far as the protection of the people was concerned. The truculent Mohammedan or the Mahratta was, in his day, a tyrant from fitful caprice, from lax police and unchecked violence. But the cold calculating Anglo-Indian was a tyrant from prescience, and his tyranny, with his superior shrewdness and power of organisation, was a system in itself, which extending, as it did, to every village market and every manufacturer's loom, touched the trades, the occupations, and the lives of the people very closely.<sup>2</sup> His commercial cupidity, under

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance, Director's Letter, dated Feb 8, 1764 (quoted in the *Second Report of the Select Committee*, 1772), Olive's Letter to the Directors, dated Sep 30, 1765 (*Third Rep* 1773, App pp 391-98, Mir Kusun's Letter, dated March 26, 1762, also *ibid*, dated May, 1762, Hastings' Letters to the Governor, dated May 13 and 26, 1762, *ibid*, dated April 25, 1762, Vansittart, *op cit* ii pp 80-81, iii 74, iii 381, Verelst, *op cit* p 8 and p 46 et seq, Account of Gray, Resident at Maldah, quoted in Verelst, p 49, Bolt, *Considerations* etc, p 191-194, Mill, *History*, Bk iv pp 327-338, also p 392 et seq, *Seir Mutaqherin* iii sec xiv esp p 201 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Vansittart's Letter to the Proprietors of India Stock, 1767, pp 88, 89, 93, quoted in Mill, *op cit* iii p 431 footnote.

a system of monopoly and coercion deprived the country of those sources of wealth of 'those rights of free production and free barter which they had enjoyed under good and bad government alike.' The consequences were too evidently exemplified in the ruin of the entire inland trade and manufacture in the decline of agriculture under oppressive systems of land-settlements in the diminution of the specie, and in the general distress of the poor. The reputation of the English was so bad in Bengal that no sooner did a European come into one of the villages than all the shops were immediately locked up and all the people for their own safety ran away. 'The sources of tyranny and oppression' said Clive in his memorable letter to the Directors which have been opened by the European agents acting under the authority of the Company's servants and the numberless black agents and sub-agents acting also under them will I fear, be a lasting reproach to the English name in this country.' In 1772 the Select Committee express themselves bound to lay open to the view of the Directors a series of transactions too notoriously known to be suppressed and too affecting to their interest, to the character and to the existence of the Company in Bengal to escape unnoticed and uncensured transactions which seem to demonstrate that every spring of their government was smeared with corruption that principles of rapacity and oppression universally prevailed and that every spark of sentiment and public spirit was lost and extinguished in the unbounded lust of unmerited wealth.<sup>1</sup> Even

R. C. Dutt, *Economic History* p. 27 and pp. 30-31

*Memoirs of a Gentleman who resided for several years in the East Indies*, quoted in Robinson, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

Old Letter to the Directors, dated Sep. 30th 1765 (*Third Report*, App. p. 391 et. seq.)

*Third Report* 1772, App No 56.



Hastings<sup>1</sup> declared as early as 1762 that "the country people are habituated to entertain the most unfavourable notion of our government" and Verelst<sup>2</sup> asked in 1772 "How could we make the sordid interests of the trader consistent with that unbiased integrity which must reconcile the natives to a new dominion?" Nothing would be a more apt and incisive description of the miserable state of the country than the celebrated simile of the author of the *Scir Mutaqherin*<sup>3</sup> in which he compares it to the predicament of an untenanted house infested by robbers but having no master to protect it

The Anglo-Indian society, itself degraded, made light of such unrighteous proceedings and the private morals of

The private morals of the Company's servants no better than their public conduct

the Company's servants were no better than their public conduct Hastings and Sir Philip Francis lived in open adultery, and extravagant rumours were afloat with respect to the latter's card-winnings The morals of the majority of the Company's servants are truthfully, if grossly, portrayed in the weekly *Hicky's Gazette*<sup>4</sup>, published a hundred years ago, and it is well-known that this notorious paper, itself conducted by one of "the most objectionable rowdy that ever landed in Calcutta," was ruined by incurring Hastings' displeasure for making public the strictly private arrangement by which the wife of the German adventurer and portrait-painter had become the wife of the great Governor-General Sunday was not only given up to horse-racing, card-gambling, and

<sup>1</sup> Hastings' Letter, dated Ap 25, 1762 quoted in R. C. Dutt, *op cit*, p 22

<sup>2</sup> Verelst, *op cit*, p 62

<sup>3</sup> *Scir Mutaqherin*, in 185

<sup>4</sup> Busteded, *Echoes from Old Calcutta* 1888, gives many specimens, see p 171 et seq (ch vii), see also pp 109-170 on the social life of the Anglo-Indians

masquerades but ' Sunday afternoons ' we are told as well as the early morning before the sun was too high in the heavens, were frequently taken advantage of to get rid of the accumulated evil passions roused between gentlemen who might be seen commonly enough furnished with swords and pistols wending their way in palanquins towards Tolly's Nullah as it enters the Hooghly to settle their little differences after the manner of Hastings and Francis and they not unfrequently returned with a pistol bullet or a sword thrust as a memento of their outing and a remembrance of the region of Kidderpore. <sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied however that the Company's Directors were trying their best to put down this state of things and were consistently condemning in unequivocal terms the conduct and character of their servants yet the policy of the Company's government itself was a faithful reflection of its narrow commercial views. In order to enhance the value of his services Clive had propagated the pernicious belief that India overflowed with riches and the servants of the Company kept up this tradition by furnishing perpetually flattering accounts of their affairs in India. <sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding a knowledge of the pecuniary embarrassments of the Company the inadequacy of the revenues and the exhaustion of the treasury the Directors were compelled, by the glorious promises so confidently made of unbounded

<sup>1</sup> In 1793, was published a book entitled "Thoughts on Duelling" by a "writer in the Hon'ble Company's Service with a view to ascertain its origin and effect on society" (Baton Karr *Selection from Calcutta Gazette* II, 584) See also *Good Old Days of Hon'ble John Company* ch. xxiii and xxv. On the profanation of Sunday see the Letter of the Directors (1798) and the proclamation of the G. G. Nov 9 1796, quoted p. cit II p. 26-27

<sup>2</sup> Mill *op. cit* III. 43... Mill records that "the inflated conceptions of the nation at large multiplied the purchasers of India stock; and it rose as high as 263 per cent.

treasures from India, to take to the desperate course of declaring from time to time impossible dividends, which had to be kept up by corrupt means and severe exactions but which involved the affairs of the Company in further financial difficulties. This had the effect of subordinating the Court of Proprietors more and more to the influence of the stock-brokers. The extraordinary disclosure of misgovernment, the deficiency of the Company's funds, its actual state of indebtedness, and the violent allegations of corrupt conduct which the Directors and their agents mutually threw upon one another raised some ferment in England and ultimately led to legislative interference. From 1774, the affairs of the Company frequently received the attentions of the Parliament, and the efforts of Sir Philip Francis succeeded in carrying the judgment of the Company's internal administration from the Court of the Directors to the bar of public opinion in England. But this intervention of the Parliament was due more to partisan animosity than to "any statesman-like desire to provide India with a better form of government." From Cornwallis's time, however, the administration of India was placed not, as hitherto had been done, in the hands of one of the Company's servants on the ground of local experience but in those of an English nobleman of elevated rank, unfettered by all local ties yet it must be admitted that there was hardly existing any definite rule of administration except that which descended to it from its commercial institutions, nor any rule of policy but that which the accident of the day supplied.<sup>1</sup> The administration yet remained to be organised and the political power to be consolidated. Verelst,<sup>2</sup> at the end of 1769, had already called attention to the feebleness and

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *History of India*, vol. II p. 4

<sup>2</sup> Verelst, *op cit* App. p. 124

want of system in the government at Fort William and the case of Hastings *versus* Francis revealed by the state-papers is a memorable testimony to the weakness of the central government, so strongly denounced by the author of the *Scir Mutaqherin* <sup>1</sup>. The beginning of the nineteenth century saw a disappearance of some of these evils no doubt, yet in other respects it witnessed no material improvement. The inevitable conviction referred to by Francis as a state of 'delirium' which took hold of almost every English official in those days was that the Dewānī lands were an inexhaustible estate for the profits of the Company and that every conceivable method should be brought to bear upon the object of making India pay: this was declared in the official language as "keeping up the revenue". Efficiency of government was judged by the standard of net gain, 'by the coarse and ready method of calculating in pias and gundas, the increase and decrease of the revenue' <sup>2</sup>. If we study the schemes of reform formulated from time to time we find that they were framed not so much in the interest of the people as in the interest of the commercial rulers of Bengal to which everything else was sacrificed.

Indeed the Hon'ble Company at home and in India had reached that depth of opposition to light and freedom which justifies even Burke's extremest passages. Ignorance was the talisman on which their power over the people and the safety of their possessions in India were supposed to depend and to dispel this popular ignorance by diffusing knowledge and education by introducing missionaries and schoolmasters by permitting freedom of public criticism was fantastically considered

*Scir Mutaqherin*, vol. III p. 185 et seq.

Firminger *op. cit.* p. cccv.



abuses of political government Grasping and mercenary spirit made the so-called guardians of the people inaccessible to the plainest dictates of reason justice and policy and infused in them a total contempt for public welfare. The evils of an alien rule were aggravated by a deep ignorance of the manners and customs of the people

and by a singular want of identification with their interests —two articles which as Ghulam Husain rightly comment <sup>1</sup> are the principles of all union and attachment, of all regulation and settlement between the governors and the governed

During these years the Mohammedan government itself was coming to an inglorious end The situation of Mir Jāfar was deplorable from the

first Old indolent, voluptuous endowed with many incurable vices, he made a very poor figure head and

with an exhausted treasury on the one hand and vast engagements to discharge on the other he was driven to severest exactions While his cruelties made him detestable negligence disorder and weakness of his government exposed him to contempt. Mir Kāsim was a more capable monarch and Vansittart<sup>2</sup> pays a well-deserved tribute to his administration Careful as he was of giving offence to the English he could not help coming into conflict with them for as Vansittart says,

scarce a day passed but occasion was taken from the most trifling pretences to trample on his Government to seize his officers and to insult them with threats and invectives " The executive power and control over criminal justice were still left in the hands of the Nawāb whose sovereign

authority was acknowledged, yet the Mohammedan government, under the dual system, had too much reason to complain of their want of influence in the country which was "torn to pieces by a set of rascals, who in Calcutta walked in rags, but when they were sent out on gomastahships, loaded it over the country, imprisoning the ryots and merchants, and writing and talking in the most insolent and domineering manner to the fowzdars and officers"<sup>1</sup> And this was not confined to a particular spot "It would amaze you," writes Mr Senior, Chief at Kasimbazar, "the number of complaints that daily come before me of the extravagancies committed by our agents and gomastahs all over the country"<sup>2</sup> Although the Company had now become actually possessed of more than one half of the Nawāb's revenue, yet the latter was continually harassed by oppressive exactions and became "no more than a banker for the Company's servants who could draw upon him [meaning presents] as often and to as great an amount as they pleased"<sup>3</sup> Naturally, the Nawāb had to fall back upon the old method of raising from the zemindars what he had himself to render to his new masters, and the tradition of the royal oppression of zemindars, handed down from the days of Muishid Kulī Khān, of which vivid pictures will be found in the pages of the *Riazoo-s-Salatīn* or the *Seer Mutaghherin*, was revived in the last days of the Mohammedan government in Bengal. The situation is vividly, if too sweepingly, narrated

<sup>1</sup> Letter of Mr Gray, President at Maldah, dated January, 1764, quoted in Verelst, *op cit* in p 49, see also the Nawāb's Letter, quoted in Vansittart, *op cit* in 381

<sup>2</sup> Letter of Mr Senior, Chief at Kasimbazar, quoted in Verelst, *op cit* p 49

<sup>3</sup> Clive's speech, dated March 30, 1772, in Almon's *Debates*, X 14, see also Mill, *op cit* in 354 et seq. In 1767, Lord Clive's own income was calculated to be at least £98,000

thus by Verelst. The violence of Meer Cassim in accumulating treasure and the relaxation of Government in the hands of Meer Jaffer equally contributed to confound all order and by removing every idea of right, sanctified in some sort the depredations of the hungry collectors. The feeble restraint of fear produced little effect while the increasing necessities of a master afforded at least a pretence of an uncontrolled exercise of power throughout every department. Inferior officers employed in the collections were permitted to establish a thousand modes of taxation. Fines were levied at pleasure without regard to justice and while each felt in his turn the iron rod of oppression he redoubled these extortions on all beneath him. The war in which Meer Jaffer was engaged against foreign enemies the struggles of Meer Cassim which ended with his destruction, and the usurpations of foreign traders completed the scene of universal confusion.<sup>1</sup>

Thus the zemindars unable to make any headway  
 Condition of the  
 zemindar against the exorbitant demand and  
 oppression of the Nawāb on the one  
 hand and of the Company's official  
 Nawābs, on the other were gradually sinking out of sight lost in obscurity. Those who survived came out of the struggle impoverished and degraded. These hereditary landlords had held the soil from very ancient times with quasi feudal powers and virtually ruled the people within their own estates. In spite of the severe strictures of Ghulam Husain<sup>2</sup> that the zemindars are at all times and in all ages a race incorrigible it can be easily shown that the ancient zemindars as a class did much for the good of the country. They maintained order settled disputes administered justice, and punished crimes they encouraged



religion and rewarded piety, they fostered arts and learning and were patrons of literature. But the iron hand of the new system brought ruin upon this hereditary aristocracy. The total change, in the management of the revenue, had brought in an innovation by which property, along with its administration, not only changed hands but was placed on a new foundation, and thus deeply affected

the condition, individually as well as collectively, of the people of Bengal. The system, introduced in the ceded districts, ignored the customary

Effects of the new  
system of land settle-  
ments

rights of the zemindars and sold their estates by public auction for increasing the revenue. The result was most lamentable. The lands were let out for a short term of three years to the highest bidder at the auction-sale. "Men without fortune or character" we are told "became bidders at the sale and while some of the former farmers, unwilling to relinquish their habitations, exceeded perhaps the real value in their offers, those who had nothing to lose advanced yet further, wishing at all events to obtain an immediate possession. Thus numberless harpies were let loose to plunder whom the spoil of a miserable people enabled to complete the first year's payment. The renters under so precarious a tenure could not venture to encourage inferior farmers by advancing money, which is seldom repaid within three years, and without the advance, even the implements of husbandry were wanting to cultivate the lands"<sup>1</sup>. Even the appointment of supervisors in 1769 in the appropriate districts, and the two councils, one at Muhsidabad and the other at Patna, did not work any improvement. The Committee of the House of Commons could not help remarking "Seven years had elapsed from the acquisition of the

<sup>1</sup> Verelst, *op cit* pp 70 71

Dawani, without the government deeming itself competent to remedy the defects.<sup>1</sup> The reports of the supervisors themselves consisting mostly of antiquarian or statistical essays, represent the government as having attained the last stage of oppressiveness and barbarism.

It is needless to comment on the condition of the ryot and the cultivator under this system.

Condition of the ryot  
and the cultivator

In a country subject to disorder and revolution infinite varieties prevailed

as Hunter points out, in the administration of the separate districts. Some districts were under the immediate jurisdiction of the subahdār while in others the hereditary zemindar preserved the appearance of power although the jealousy of the subahdār and an increased taxation left to him little more than a nominal authority. The country laboured under the disorders of unbounded despotism. To add to this a great national disaster occurred in the terrible famine of 1769-70 which cut off ten to twelve millions of human beings. Even before 1769 high prices had given indication of an approaching famine but the tax was collected as rigorously as ever.<sup>2</sup>

The Great Famine of  
1769-70

The suffering of the people was heightened so much by the acts of

the Company's agents and sub-agents that the Court of Directors indignantly condemned their method of profiting by universal distress.<sup>3</sup> Hastings writing

*Fifth Report*, p. 4. et seq. Also see *Sixth Report* of 1782, App. I, Colebrooke's *Supplement to the Digest of Bengal Regulations* pp. 174-180.

Hunter *Annals of Rural Bengal* p. 20-21; also pp. 399-404.

Firminger *op cit.* p. cxcix. See also Letter to Bengal dated August 28, 1771, quoted in Anber *op cit.* pp. 354-5. It is difficult to say how far the famine was due to an intentional "cornering" of the grain or similar unscrupulous commercial transactions; but this was the widely prevalent complaint and Stavorinus (vol. I p. 853) ascribes the famine partly to the "monopoly which the English had made of the rice.

in 1772, sets down the loss of population "at least of one-third of the inhabitants of the province", and even twenty years later, Cornwallis officially described one-third of Bengal left as a jungle, inhabited only by wild beasts. The English knew very little about the country at that time and did less for its inhabitants. Even state-charity was grudged and land-tax was as rigorous as ever. Hastings points out in 1772 that "notwithstanding the loss of at least one-third of the inhabitants of the province, and the consequent decrease of the cultivation, the nett collections of the year 1771 exceeded even those of 1768". In 1771, one-third of the cultivable land was

returned in the public accounts as  
 Its effects on the land- "deserted" in 1776, the entries in  
 lord and the tenant this column exceeded to one-half of

the whole district, four acres lying waste to every seven. But the Company increased its demands from less than £100,000 sterling in 1772 to close on £112,000 in 1776.<sup>1</sup> One-third of the generation of peasants had been swept away and a whole generation of once rich families had been reduced to indigence. The revenue-farmers who had been unable to realise the tax were stripped of their office, shorn of their lands, and thrown ultimately into prison. The zemindars who had hitherto lived like semi-independent chiefs, fared worse<sup>2</sup> and Sir William Hunter rightly remarks that "from the year 1770, the ruin of the two-thirds of the old aristocracy of Lower Bengal dates".

The great Famine also deeply affected the relation of the tenant to the landlord and of the landlords to one another. Nearly one-third of Bengal fell out of tillage

<sup>1</sup> Hunter, *op cit* p 63 64

<sup>2</sup> Hunter (*op cit* p 56 ff) cites the well known cases of the Maharaja of Burdwan, the Raja of Nadia, and Rani Banwari of Rajshahi.

and the scarcity of the cultivators at a time when there was more land than men to till it gave the ryot the advantage over the zemindar who was now compelled to court the peasant and make him tempting offers. This not only led to the growth of the two classes of resident and non resident ryots and to a constant friction between them but it also added to the general misery by fostering violent feuds and quarrels among landed proprietors who had eagerly begun to bid against one another for the husbandman. These armed feuds between the landlords very greatly disturbed the repose of the districts<sup>1</sup> and it is no wonder that the zemindars are described in contemporary records as 'continual disturbers of the peace of the province'

From the time of this Famine also robbery and dacoity became disastrously prevalent. Large tracts of land around every village grew into thick jungles which fostered not only wild beasts but gave umbrage to terrible gangs of robbers. Besides the numerous and prosperous classes like the *thangs* who practised robbery as a hereditary calling and the bands of cashiered soldiers who turned vagrants there were thousands of people who were driven by destitution to the desperate course of plundering, and from 1771 the suppression of these lawless sects who sometimes roved about the country in armies many thousands strong<sup>2</sup> was a matter of serious consideration to the Council. Organised outrages took place within an ear-shot from the seat of government. Long records how

Prevalence of robbery and dacoity

Hunter *op. cit.*, pp. 60-61 p. 65.

See a graphic account of the effects of dacoity in the Regulation of 1772 (35th Reg.), quoted in Colebrooke's *Supplement to the Digest* p. 113. Also see Hunter *op. cit.* pp. 69 et. seq.

in 1780 a very terrible case of robbery, accompanied by incendiarism and violence, occurred in Calcutta in which about 15,000 houses were burnt down and nearly 200 people were killed<sup>1</sup> Dacoity and robbery, with all its incidental terrors, prevailed in Bengal for more than three quarters of a century,<sup>2</sup> and left the life and property of the people absolutely insecure

The ancient police system, whether it consisted of the system of the village watchman, or of the *nugdees*, or of the *thānādārs*, as we find in the Bengal of 1760, was in a disorganised state when the English came into power, and was quite insufficient for the preservation of the peace or for the apprehension of thieves and gang-robbers There was collusion with the criminals not only on the part of the petty zemindars, as the early administrators of Bengal tell us, but also on the part of these regularly constituted keepers of the public peace<sup>3</sup> To meet the disorders of the country, the Faujdārī system was established in 1774 but it is well-known

<sup>1</sup> Long, *Calcutta in Olden Time*, p 37 See also Busteed, *op cit* p 157, *Good Old Days*, ch xviii, Seton-Karr, *op cit* ii 213 14, 233, Forrest, *Selections from State Papers*, Warren Hastings, ii 289

<sup>2</sup> Kaye (*Administration of the East India Company*, III ii and iii) gives an account of Thuggee and Dacoity in later years Even as late as 1810, we find Lord Minto (Minute, dated Nov 24, 1810) writing, "A monstrous and disorganised state of society existed under the eye of the supreme British authorities and almost at the very seat of the Government The people are perishing almost in our sight every week's delay is a doom of slaughter and torture against the defenceless inhabitants of very populous countries"

<sup>3</sup> The greater zemindars had always a large number of troops at their disposal and sometimes the village watchman was enrolled on the establishment of the zemindars They were employed not only in their original capacity but also in the collection of the revenue Extensive duties similarly were expected from the Faujdār

how vigorously the system was criticised by the opposition members of the Council and condemned as oppressive by the author of the *Seir Mutaqherin* <sup>1</sup>. It was candidly admitted by the Resolution of April 6 1780 that the establishment of faujdārs and thānadārs "has by experience been found not to produce the good effects intended by the institution". On the old division of authority between the Nāzim and the Dewān the executive power including criminal administration was allotted to the Nāzim while the Dewān possessed the civil jurisdiction. The establishment of two courts of justice the Dewāni and the Faujdāri Adālat which were controlled by the superior Sadar Dewāni and Nizāmat Adālat at the Presidency of Fort

The system of criminal and civil justice

William was made by the Regulations of the Committee of Circuit<sup>2</sup> chiefly

on the basis on this old distinction. One of the effects of the Regulations referred to was to transfer the Courts of Appeal from Murshidabad to Calcutta and to give the Collector the right to preside over local civil courts and keep vigilance over the local criminal courts yet the criminal jurisdiction of the Nawāb was not taken away nor were miscarriages of justice and long felt abuses removed by these Regulations. The establishment for the Mayor's Court, of the Supreme Court in Calcutta to which Francis was so stoutly opposed brought again in its train a number of notorious evils and one need hardly recall Macaulay's account of the high handed proceedings of this Court. It was not until 1790 that the superintendence of criminal justice throughout the province was accepted by the English<sup>3</sup> and judicial administration was not placed

<sup>1</sup> *Seir Mutaqherin*, Hl. p. 170-170. See *Fifth Report*, pp. 43 et seq.

Colebrooke p. cit. 114; also quoted and discussed in Firminger *op. cit.* pp. cccxi & seq.

<sup>2</sup> Cornwallis's Minute December 3, 1780; also Regulation V and IX of 1783. Also *Fifth Report*, pp. 20-42; Seton Karr *Cornwallis* pp. 83-94.

upon a sound footing until many years elapsed. Even in 1793, the preamble to the several Regulations of that year show that there must have been much confusion, abuse of justice, delay in procedure, and uncertainty of jurisdiction in civil and criminal courts.

The reforms of Cornwallis were not only in the right direction in these respects but they also struck a note of sympathy with the poor suffering ryot. But the ruin of the zemindars, begun by Mīr Kāsim and hastened by the *yārā* settlement, was finally completed by the celebrated measure of 1793,

Reforms of 1793

which, though it did credit to the benevolent intentions of Cornwallis proved at least for the time being disastrous to many in an ancient aristocratic family of Bengal. It would be out of place to discuss here this measure in all its bearings,<sup>1</sup> but it must be admitted that it was not only insufficient in affording protection to the ryot against the rack-renting power of the zemindar but it also became the means of *unsettling* many old zemindaries. It created a class of landlords destitute for the most part of public spirit and higher culture. The principle of the permanence of assessment, co-operating with splendid fertility of the Ganges valley, afforded, no doubt, a happy prospect of peaceful multiplication of the people and spread of civilisation, yet the wealthy ancient aristocracy, which for a long time constituted the main support of society and the great patron of arts and literature, was slowly breaking down under the stringent rules which put up their large estates to public auction at the mercy of the highest bidder. The class of up-start zemindars who stepped into their

<sup>1</sup> See on this question, Field, *op cit*, Harrington's *Analysis*, Seton-Karr, *Cornwallis*, ch II, *Fifth Report*, p 12 *et seq.*, Mill, *op cit* bk. vi ch 56, R C Dutt, *op. cit.* ch v, etc.

place could not be expected to possess the same inherited tradition of culture and refinement as marked the ancient aristocracy of the land. Side by side with these, there was created another class of landlords by the very measure itself for under the new law the mere collector of the revenue was in many cases, invested with every proprietary right in the land.

Before passing from this cursory account of the dissolution of the Mohammedan government and the ruin of the zemindars, it would not be out of place to refer to

the depraved moral influence of the  
Moral depravity of  
the period. Mohammedan court upon the courts of  
the noblemen and also upon the society

in general. The vivid pages of the *Seir Mutakherin* has already made familiar to us the depth of luxury debauchery and moral depravity of the period and Ghulam Husain in one place offers a few bitter remarks on the ethicalty of Moorsheedabad.<sup>1</sup> 'It must be observed he says that in those days Moorsheedabad wore very much the appearance of one of Loth's towns and it is still pretty much the same to-day.

Nay the wealthy and powerful having set apart sums of money for these sorts of amours used to show the way and to entrap and seduce the unwary the poor and the feeble and as the proverb says—*so is the king so becomes his people*—these amours got into fashion. It is no wonder therefore that this atmosphere of luxury and moral degeneration did not fail to vitiate the general moral tone of society especially of the upper classes. Public opinion was so low that very many forms of shameless vice often accompanied by cruelty and violence attracted little condemnation and received less punishment. It reminds one of the days of Charles II and his courtiers. It



is needless to recapitulate details— but it may be noted that hardly any of the worthies of this period, whether Hindu or Musalman, could ever show, both in their public and private life, a perfectly clean record. One can easily understand from this the degenerate tone in the writings of the period, which sprang up chiefly round the courts of these rajas or zemindars who were the dispensers of the daily bread of the poets. Even the work of the devout Rām-prasād or of the illiterate Kābiwālās was not entirely free from this almost universal taint.

Next to the zemindars, came the class of learned Brāhmans, the other important factor of the social fabric, who suffered no less from these political and social changes. Even in this period of anarchy and oppression, the priestly class, however fallen or cried down in modern times, was recognised as the head of society, as the spiritual guide and enlightener of the race. Whatever damaging influence their much-too-decried exclusiveness might have produced, it cannot be denied that as a class they hardly ever fell below this high expectation. The occupation of the Brāhmans, although on the decline, had not yet lost its ancient lustre and dignity and

The humiliation of the Brāhmans

there were men among them still who were, as of yore, capable of fearless acts of self-sacrifice for the good of the community. The Brāhmans were not only the educators of the nation but also its lawgivers, its judges, and at times its acknowledged head and dictator in social matters. Although literature was not their profession, their sphere of usefulness consisted in their interest in mental and spiritual culture. But a change of the deepest kind was coming over the spirit of this ancient and honoured class. After the political storm of the century had blown over, the Brāhmans found themselves utterly neglected, nay, humiliated and

ruined. They had not only lost the patronage at court and of the great landed aristocracy who always revered their learning and piety but they also found themselves losing together with their ancient prestige the free charitable gifts of landed property to which they mainly looked up for their support. A regulation was passed in 1793 for enquiry into the validity of various existing *Lākkerāj* grants and as a direct result of this many of these presumed charitable grants were cancelled. This dealt a severe blow to the poor Brāhmins who thus shorn of their land and their glory became more and more dependant than ever for their living on the gifts of the lower classes to whose tastes and superstitions they were now compelled to pander. The most enlightened among them no doubt, remained isolated or retired into obscurity in moody silence but the majority of them did everything in their power to please the mob who were now almost their only customers. With the fall of the Brāhmins however there was no doubt the rise of the powerful middle class but the ruin of this hereditary intellectual class was a loss in itself. The axe was laid at the root of ancient learning and ancient culture the influence which produced the sublime in Hindu civilisation vanished the influence which produced the superstitions and the ridiculous in it increased. Such was the state of knowledge and culture at the beginning of the last century that Jayanārāyaṇ Tarkapañchānaṇ in his preface to the *Sarvadarsana Saṁgraha* had to lament that the pundits of his time never cared to read more than four books in their lifetime and just before the foundation of Calcutta Sanscrit College such was the ignorance of the Bengali pundits that none of them could enlighten Sir William Jones on the subject of ancient Sanscrit drama.

This decline of the society and the intellect of Bengal is almost synchronous with and, no doubt, was facilitated by the decay of Mohammedan rule and the prevalence of the Company's misrule, but the process, slow enough to be almost imperceptible, was, however, not due to this circumstance alone. The political and social causes no doubt hastened the decadence already afoot but it would be hasty and unphilosophical to attribute everything to such extraneous causes. There was something wrong in the social structure itself to account for this decadence. A little reflection will show that the Hindu society carried within itself the germs of its own decay. However beneficial the institution of caste might have been to the ancient society, of which it formed the universal and natural basis, it cannot be doubted that its exclusiveness, in course of time, gave rise to a monopoly, which, like the monopoly of the mediaeval monks of Europe, proved injurious to intellectual progress beyond a certain stage. Within the small privileged hereditary class to which the spread of knowledge was confined, the arts and sciences, no doubt, were carried to a pitch of perfection, but competition, thus artificially limited, naturally gave no scope to favourable variations in intellectual development. The intellectual capacity of the individual or the class was increased at the cost of general ignorance and inferiority of the race. The system made life easy and smooth and comparatively free from that struggle and unrest which is the inexorable condition of all progress. This state of things, leading as it did to decadence, could not continue long, and under the influence of Mohammedanism and its doctrine of equality, a fresh impetus was given to progress by relaxing the restrictions of the caste system. From about the beginning

of the 16th century we have a succession of religious and social reformers Rāmānanda Kabīr Nānak and Chaitanya all of whom protested against caste Mohammedan and preached universal brotherhood

It was this impulse which gave an early impetus to the vernacular literatures of India for these reformers unlike the learned Sanscritists preached to the people in the language of the people and their teachings were embodied in voluminous works which enriched the vernacular literatures But although the rigour of the caste system was for a time overcome and a healthy feeling for equality was abroad the evils of the time honoured institution firmly rooted through centuries into the social fabric could not be eradicated in a day They continued to do their work and hastened the decadence which, in spite of the attempts of these religious reformers had become inevitable and the anti-caste influence of the British contact and of European literature only intensified the change already set on foot by the

Bairābā and other movements  
 British influence on Although at this critical time the East

India Company in England and in India sunk to the lowest depth of philistinism apprehended the spread of knowledge and western ideas fatal to the British rule yet it was fortunate that there were self sacrificing missionaries and schoolmasters ready for the work and a few far-sighted statesmen who notwithstanding the narrow policy of the government at home thought it god like bounty to bestow expansion of intellect The empire in India had been moreover founded at a time when the tide was turning when Europe was in the throes of a great Revolution which considered politically socially and intellectually is one of the greatest in modern history The wave of liberalism which was to pass through Europe



intelligible With the fall of the Brāhmins and general decadence of social and intellectual life

Religious life at the beginning of the 19th century in the country there was also a partial decadence of the religious life and ideals of the people, imperceptibly

making its headway from the Mohammedan times It does not concern us here as to how much of this was due to decadent Buddhism or decadent Banianism or how far the aboriginal ethnical element in Lower Bengal reacted upon it The mass of superstitions had always existed and still everywhere exists but from this time onwards there was a deliberate rejection of the spiritual side of the old faith and a corresponding identification with the semi-aboriginal superstitions of the masses Public opinion on religious matters was low although the religiosity of the people cannot be denied and the undoubted belief in the absolving efficacy of superstitious rites calmed the imagination and allayed the terrors of conscience Empty rituals depraved practices and even horrid ceremonies like hook swinging human sacrifice, and infanticide partially justify the unsparing abuse of our religion by the missionaries

decayed but not dead But what the missionaries could not perceive in their proselytising zeal

was that the religious life of the Hindu had never been quite extinct. There had been decay since the Mohammedan rule aggravated by various complex causes but not death there had been an increase of feebleness but not absolute inanition An age which produced the *Gaṅgūbhakti-taraṅgiṇī Harītila* or the devotional songs of Rām prāsād could not indeed be said

The four di'argent currents. to be devoid of religious life The devotional fervour of Śrī Chaitanya the intellectual ideas of nityāyik Raghunātha the ritualistic doctrines of smārta Raghunandan

nātha the ritualistic doctrines of smārta Raghunandan



Religious reactions  
of the 19th cen-  
tury

in favour of what may be called  
rationalistic Hinduism and other  
religious movements in the 19th  
century bear witness to its inward

strength as well as to the inherited spirituality of the  
Hindu

It is obvious that under these political social and  
intellectual conditions no literature

These facts partly  
explain the literary  
barrenness of the peri-  
od between 1760 and  
1800

worth the name could easily flourish.  
With the ruin of the zemindars and  
the degradation of the Brāhmins  
who constituted respectively the aris-

toocracy of wealth and the aristocracy of intellect a process  
of disintegration had begun in the social fabric which  
ended in an absolute dissolution of all social solidarity. It  
took nearly half a century before there was a general  
subsidence of these effects and a new order of things  
could take the place of the old. With a reconstruction  
of art and ideal, there was indeed the birth of a  
new world and a new literature but generally speak-  
ing from the 18th century to the middle of the  
19th, we have only rude unshaped writings interesting  
to the student, but no masterpiece acceptable to all.  
It was essentially a transitional stage and there can be  
no doubt that these vicissitudes of the 18th century and  
the monotonous material and intellectual development of  
the first half of the 19th robbed Bengali literature of many  
an imaginative writer. Calcutta had not yet settled down  
into a metropolis and with the dispersal of the Moham-  
medan government and the Hindu zemindars there was  
no fixed intellectual centre which would have brought  
the advantages of social solidarity among those who still  
retained literary instincts and aspirations. Bhārat-  
chandra died in 1760 and in a short time occurred



The death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 marks the decay of the older current in literature

also the deaths of Durgāprasād and Rām-prasād. With these last great names, we are at the end of what remained of ancient Bengali literature.

During the continuance of the dual system of government between '65 and '72, the older poets, one by one, passed away, and none remained who could for a time step into their vacant place. Between the death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 and the first appear-

The interregnum till the emergence of the new literature was broken chiefly, if not wholly, by the Kabiwalas,

ance of Īśvai Gupta in *Sambād-prabhākari* of 1830, there came an interregnum of more than half a century, during which there was no man who had been strong enough to

seize the unclaimed sceptre. The only pretenders were the Kabiwalas, but they never rose to that level of artistic merit and sustained literary composition which would have enabled them to strike a commanding figure on the empty stage. Who would think of placing Haim Thākuri or Rām

some of whom were men of undoubted powers

Basu side by side with Bhārat-chandra or Rām-prasād? These Kabiwalas left behind them few things of permanent literary value, for although

some of them were men of undoubted poetic power, they never cultivated literature for its own sake, but composed their songs chiefly to please their

Their place in literature not very high

new patrons in society: the upstart zemindars, the wealthy speculators, or the illiterate mass whose chief amusement consisted of these songs, *pīnāchālīs*, or *ṣṭāṣṭī*. The Kabi literature, therefore, is one of a very composite character, and side by side with the higher flights, we have interspersed not a little amount of flat colloquial verbiage which no stretch of literary charity

would ever call poetic in the true sense of the term. The literary ideal was not as can be expected very high, and its tone not always commendable yet one thing most remarkable about these songs, which puts them in sharp contrast with the literature which Bhārat-chandra set in fashion was its comparative freedom from the stamp of ornateness or erudite classicality as well as from the vitiated moral tone which defaces the writings of many a great poet of this period. Yet in spite of these and other merits none of the Kabiwalas had reached that standard of literary excellence which would have enabled them to emulate the more substantial writings of the older poets although they contributed some truly beautiful pieces to the literature of national songs. Fallen on evil days their genius seems never to have received its fullest scope and besides keeping our literature back from absolute death during the period of interregnum their work seems to possess historically no other permanent value. They act

But they did their best, during this long period of barrenness, to keep it back from absolute death

as a link keeping up the continuity of our literary history and though by themselves affording an interesting field of study they belong through their literary filiation and inherited

artistic tradition to the age preceding our era

By the beginning of the 19th century however the old order was changing yielding place to new. A new literature a new spirit, and a new order of society were gradually taking the place of the time honoured institutions which had held their sway over the country for centuries.

Effect of the revolutionary changes which the British occupation of Bengal brought about.

We often find in literary history that with some great revolution political social or religious literature receives a fresh impetus. We need hardly recall the example of the

French Revolution from which dates a period of literary activity which has culminated in the rich literary after-growths of modern Europe. But the popular opinion, long and actually entertained, that the British occupation of Bengal by itself sufficiently accounted for and directly caused the disappearance of ancient literature as distinguished from modern, is a delusion which the revived study of the literature itself would, in a great measure, help to check and

The British 'conquest', as generally supposed, never swept off the old literature and replaced it with the new; it merely helped a process of decadence in literature already afoot.

correct. However great and far-reaching its effect was, the British 'conquest' no more swept away ancient Bengal and its literature and replaced it with something else than the Norman Conquest of England directly caused the disappearance of Anglo-

saxon England and its literature. Modern evolutionary theory hardly leaves any room for such absolute political or literary cataclysms, and a little consideration will show that the British occupation of Bengal, like the Norman one of England, only helped and turned to good a process of decadence in literature, which had independently begun, which was going on rapidly, and which, if the political revolution had not dealt a death-blow to the exhausted literature would have landed it independently in absolute barrenness and stagnation.

In order to appreciate what effect British occupation of Bengal produced upon Bengali literature, we must realise in what state it actually had been when the new start was made. It was, as we have stated, a period of great confusion. The political and social disturbances, no doubt, as the apologist of Bengali literature often points out, were affecting men's minds, and the physical and mental fatigue consequent thereupon is responsible to a great extent for this lamented paucity of literary productions,

but if we look to the literature itself we shall see that a process of inherent decay and dissolution had already begun in it which indicated rapid decline, and which if unchecked might have independently led to its ultimate extinction. A change of the deepest and widest kind was coming over the spirit of Bengali literature during the years when the political destiny of India was being decided in other fields but this change, such as it was meant no good augury to its future course.

In spite of occasional royal patronage as in the cases of Bidyapati or Kabir kankan the vernacular literature before the 18th century very seldom found shelter in the courts of the wealthy and it was never in any sense courtly literature. From this period

What this process was and how it came about.

however, it began to centre round the courts of the wealthy and a new world that of the courtier and the

adventurer was being formed. The courts of Rājā

Kṛṣṇachandra of Nadiyā and of Rājā

State of Bengal literature on the eve of the 18th century

Rāj ballabh of Dacca were notable not only for their luxury their splendour and their intrigues, but also for their

patronage of arts and literature. But this court-influence as it would be natural to expect in this age, was not an unmixed good. Poetry which had hitherto consisted of simple tales of village-life or of devotional poems of rare beauty and fervour had now to appeal exclusively to the upper classes of society whose taste and temper it naturally reflected. As on the one hand it gained in refinement and splendour, so on the other it lost all its pristine simplicity, and was marked with a stamp of ornateness and erudite classicism which found favour with these courts. What had been fervid and spontaneous became fantastic and elaborate and with these new poets, some of

whom were good scholars, intellect and fancy predominated over sentiment and passion, ingenuity took the place of feeling, and poetry lost its true accent. On the one hand, arose around the court of Kṛṣṇachandīa the artificial school of Bhārat-chandīa, whose poetry, more fanciful than delicate, more exquisite than passionate, first turned the tide in favour of ornate and artificial standards of verse-

The existing schools of Bengali literature by their excesses gave unmistakable proof of decadence and foreshadowed the close of the literary age

making on the other hand, under the patronage of the rival court of Rājā Rāj-ballabh, flourished a more serious, though less poetical, group of writers who exhibit the same tendency to ornate diction and luxuriant style

and the same weakness for frigid conceits but whose profundity, allegorical fancy, didactic taste, and consequent monotony present a striking contrast to the more voluptuous and attractive school at Nadīyā. Both these schools, by their excesses, marked the close of the literary age. In spite of the exquisite quality of his phrase and his numbers, that exalt him to a place all his own, Bhārat-chandra was a far greater artist than a true poet. He was a sure and impeccable master of his own craft, yet we must confess here, as everywhere, a fall of the true poetic spirit, the want of inspiration, the preference of what catches the eye to what touches the

The school at Nadīyā of which Bhārat-chandra was the literary exponent

heart. Bhārat-chandīa is not very often original yet when he imitates, he does not choose the best models

but only tries to improve upon the very second-rate works of later artificial Kāvya poets like Māgha and Śiṃharsa, or even worse things from a class of degenerate Mohammedan tales of dubious taste and excellence. Poetry is increasingly regarded as a means of the display of elaborate conceits till

at length nothing remains but artfulness and verbal jugglery. The consummate elegance of these writings is undoubted but the poet seldom transports. Lifeless description pompous similes learned digressions—a style which cannot be summed up otherwise than by the term ‘*florid*’—these mark the makeshifts by which the lack of genuine poetic emotion is sought to be made up. Pathos or tragedy in the strict and rare sense these poets seldom or never touch and the way in which they have repainted the ideal heroes of old recall to one’s mind Dryden’s travesties of Milton or of Shakespeare. Admitting even the pictorial effect the musical cadence and the wonderful spell of language which are the chief redeeming features of this poetry the taste and style are sometimes so vitiated and vulgar that it fully deserves the nemesis of neglect which is gradually falling upon it. The degenerate court influence went a long way not only in fostering a certain feminine languor and luxuriance of style, but it was also responsible for the taint of indecency which often mars its best passages. This grossness was, no doubt partly conventional and sprang obviously from the poetic convention established by the later artificial schools of Sanscrit Poetry but even admitting this it must be said that attempts to excuse this utter want of decency and of morals have all proved futile and the least valid of all is that which would shield this poetry under the mantle of the classics. The *kutnis* take the place of *dūitis* of Baisnaba songs; and the course of illicit love or lust with all its intricacies of courtship, intrigue and insolence was never suffered to flaunt itself with such shameless impudence. Even Rām prasaīd, in spite of his religious songs could not escape the contagion and the exquisite lyrics of the kaviwalas were not wholly free from the taint.

These enormities in the existing schools of poetry certainly indicate the close of the literary age. Excess of folly in poetry, like excess of injustice in political matters, lead up to and foretell revolutions. Besides, the course of ancient Bengali itself as a whole suffered from many drawbacks which hampered its growth cruelly and which might by

Inherent drawbacks  
in the old literature  
itself which retarded  
its growth

itself have led to its ultimate extinction. Of these drawbacks, the monotony of subject and the limitation of form were the foremost and engage the critic at

once. It is true that the social and political conditions under an alien rule were never wholly favourable to the quiet development of national culture, that the contempt with which vernacular literature had been universally held always retarded its growth, that the Baisnaba movement, even though it had wrested the monopoly of learning from the Brāhmins as a class, was more a sectarian than a wide-spread national tendency, and it only intensified the devotional ardour which had very few opportunities for complete secularisation, and that literature, at least in the vernacular, was seldom cultivated for its own sake in those days when a leisured class of literary or scientific men had never arisen, yet even these circumstances do not wholly explain the absolute limitation of subject to religion in the main, and out of religion

Limitation of subject

to a little legend, a little contemporary social song, and the thinnest surplus of other matters. Glorification of gods and goddesses seems to be the ultimate object of all the poets, who could not venture to publish anything except under the borrowed garb of religion. The marvellous results accomplished even within this limitation show that there was surely nothing wrong with the genius of these poets but something was wrong in the literature itself, that its

theme was too narrow and limited to afford the fullest scope for development and progress.

Conservatism in taste

One of the remarkable tendencies of later Hindu culture generally and of all ancient vernacular literature in particular was, that they carried the suppression of individuality too far and that the consequence has been to exalt authority and discourage originality. Of course nothing can be more objectionable than the obtrusive self assertiveness of modern times yet it must be admitted that it nevertheless furthers intellectual progress by relaxing the severity of effects conventionalities and allowing ambition freer scope and wider soaring region. But this limitation of subject

Monotony of form

and this conservative taste were coupled with a further limitation of ancient poetry in its form its staple of stereotyped verses beyond which it could never stray but which was apt to become dull monotonous and sing-song especially because of its sectional pauses. But the greatest drawback which would of itself indicate the poverty of the literature in its certain aspects, was the

Absence of prose

complete absence of prose as a vehicle of literary expression. It is true that in all literature as the immortal jest of Moliere implies *prose always comes after poetry* yet in ancient Bengali literature we have practically very little good prose at all, however late.

In critically examining the literary history of Bengal in the pre British era it is impossible to mistake the significance of these facts namely, that its poetry, though vigorously started under the best auspices and though



attaining to some measure of relative perfection, was itself failing, and that at no period of its long history, it produced prose that could be called such. There must have been something wrong in the very system, some coldness in the literary constitution to account for this decadence and this poverty. If a literature after producing great things in the past does nothing more for centuries, if it shows signs of decadence and practically limits itself to trifles, then the conclusion is irresistible that it badly wants a change. Long before the stability of British rule was beyond all question a process of decadence or dissolution had already begun which indicated a change in its spirit. The British occupation and its accompanying evils only hastened this change, so that a new era of literary history began in Bengal with the firm establishment of British rule. It is amiable but entirely unhistorical imagination which suggests that

These facts show that the decadent literature, if it were to prolong its life, needed a change, and the change was brought by the British occupation of Bengal.

it was the British rule which entirely swept away the old literature and replaced it with the new. There was no such absolute breach of the continuity of our literary history, a change was inevitable and the

British rule brought it about in the most novel and unexpected way, although it would be difficult to say what form it would have taken had there been no British occupation of Bengal.

The commencement of the 19th century saw a more settled order of things. Beginning with the patch-work of the Regulating Act of 1774, vigorous attempts were made

The beginning of the 19th century

to reform the abuses of misrule which had been bringing disgrace to British ideas of justice and honour, and the permanence of British rule was now more or less a settled

fact The Company in the meantime had been extending its territories beyond the limits of Bengal Hastings had boldly thrown aside the mask of dual government which Clive had thought so expedient to wear But even Hastings boldly ambitious of founding an Empire in India could not carry out what he levised The records of the period give us some glimpses of good intentions but there was little of actual performance From Cornwallis's time however we enter upon a brighter period Cornwallis had greater freedom from interference or control and his noble rank enabled him to demand his own terms from the wise-heads at Leadenhall Street In spite of Thornton's strictures it cannot be denied that Cornwallis realised for the first time that the governed as well as the governors ought to be considered in all system of good government It was he who gave a better moral tone to the civil service It is not necessary here to trace step by step this gradual process of political reconstruction from Cornwallis's time onward or enter into the details of every scheme of reform or every administrative measure The general effect of these changes was that the Company was gradually being transformed from a trading corporation into a sovereign power The idea that Bengal was an estate which yielded a large rental but involved none of the responsibilities of government had not it is true totally disappeared but none of the administrators since this time can be regarded as mere land-stewards of a private property Narrow views still prevailed but we find a liberal minded Governor General like Wellesley laying stress upon the fact that the Factory had grown into an Empire and that the civil servants should not consider themselves as mere agents of a commercial concern but as responsible officers and administrators whose duty it was to understand the people.

The revenue system began to be placed on a secure footing. There was greater peace and order throughout the country, and the civil, criminal, and police functions of the government were beginning to be organised. The rural administration was taken in hand and

Calcutta was forming itself into a metropolis. In 1771, we find Calcutta a straggling village of mud-houses, the whole of the ground south of Chandpal Ghat thickly covered with jungle and forest-trees. From 1780 onwards, we read in the Calcutta papers of frequent complaints about the indescribably filthy condition of the streets and roads which is fully confirmed by the account of Grandpré in 1790, who tells us of the canals and cess-pools reeking with putrefying animal matter the awful stench coming out of them the myriads of flies and flocks of animals and birds acting as scavenger <sup>1</sup>. In the times of Hastings and Francis and for a long time after that, dacoity and highway robbery within a mile of the seat of government and of the Supreme Court were, we have seen, crimes exceedingly prevalent. But when Hastings' government abolished the provincial Revenue Councils and transferred from Muishidabad to Calcutta the seat of the Supreme Courts of Justice as well as the head-seat of revenue administration and the Khalsa, Calcutta was being deliberately designed to become ultimately the political capital of Bengal <sup>2</sup>. By 1800, a busy

<sup>1</sup> This state of things continued for a long time and we here of constant complaints of this not only in the English papers and also in the *Samāchār darpan* as late 1818. See the *Samāchār darpan*, Nov. 14, 1818, May 27, 1820 etc (the quotations, will be found given in my article on the above mentioned paper in *Sāhitya Parīsat Patrikā* vol. 24, no. 3, p. 163.)

<sup>2</sup> Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, vol. 1 p. 263

and flourishing town was being built up<sup>1</sup> and attracted by its commercial importance of which notwithstanding the monopoly of the Company and its discouragement of private enterprise Stavorinus writing so far back as 1770 bears strong testimony many Bengali families as well as men of other nationalities began to settle down

Intellectual and social centres springing up along the banks of the Ganges, close to Calcutta.

From the time of the inroads of the Marhattas people had fled from the interior and settled down on the banks of the Ganges close to Calcutta, where in course of time there arose

several flourishing towns while the rest of Bengal lay under disorder and misrule Bengal in the times past had many capitals and many centres of learning and all these now converged to the few spots along the Ganges-bank and chiefly to the metropolis. It is natural to expect that here with Calcutta as its centre, began the earliest efforts to diffuse knowledge reform abuses formulate new ideas and build up a new order of society and literature From this arises the importance of the metropolis in later Bengali literature—an importance which will be more fully realised when we consider that refined

Importance of the city and the metropolis in later Bengali literature.

urbanity is one of the main characteristics which differentiates the modern literature from its pre-British predecessor

If the ancient literature as one of its historians says was a gift of the lower to the higher classes and was fostered chiefly in the remote and secluded

On the history and topography of old Calcutta, literature is scattered and plentiful. One may however consult with advantage A. K. Roy *A Short History of Calcutta*; Rainey *Topographical and Historical Sketch of Calcutta 1876*; Busteed *Echoes from Old Calcutta*; Cotton, *Calcutta Old and New*; articles in *Bengal Past and Present* and references given therein; Long *Calcutta in Olden time*

Urbanity of modern  
Bengali literature

village-homes, the modern literature is mostly the work of the educated man of the city, and a gift from him spreading down to the lowest classes. In studying modern literature, we must steadily keep our eyes fixed upon these centres of influences, of which Calcutta and Śrīrāmpur, as we shall see, become all-important in the first stage of our history.

Growth of Calcutta  
and its awakening to  
new influences

the European and the Bengali communities, a new era was beginning in the social and literary history of the people. Happily for the country, the hour of awakening to new thoughts had dawned. On the 10th October, 1800, we find the missionaries at Śrīrāmpur thus writing home: "There appears to be a favourable change in the general temper of the people. Commerce has roused new thoughts and awakened new energies, so that hundreds, if we could skilfully teach them, would crowd to learn the English language."<sup>1</sup> Hitherto Education had been totally neglected. The history of English education in Bengal has a very important bearing on the history of the intellectual progress and will be sketched in its proper place, it would be enough to indicate here that during the early days of the Company's rule, the promotion of education, neither here nor in England, was regarded as a duty of the government, on the contrary, the safety of the Indian Empire was thought to depend

State of English edu-  
cation in the begin-  
ning of the 19th cen-  
tury

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *Life of William Carey*, (New reprint, 1912), p. 274, Eustace Carey, *Memoirs of William Carey*, pp. 406-7.

upon keeping the people immersed in ignorance. It was not until Wellesley's time that more liberal ideas began to gain ground. Thus the history of education in this early period as we shall see, consisted chiefly of the educational efforts of private individuals who had set up schools for instruction in the rudiments of learning. Such small isolated attempts are obviously by their very nature bound to be transitory and such private schools could not surely be expected to answer the larger purpose of national education. Such humble efforts date so far back as 1747<sup>1</sup> but the desire of prospering in commercial enterprise under the new condition of things served as a great incentive to English education as Persian education, now declining had been eagerly sought for under the Mohammedan administration. In 1796 only a few Bengali children were taught by European school masters but gradually a set of Bengali teachers possessing a smattering of English came into existence and opened schools. In those days however penmanship quickness in calculations and a knowledge of accounts were considered greater accomplishments than an accurate study of English itself and even men like Rām-dulāl De we are told never cared to make a better acquaintance with English than picking up a few broken phrases of colloquial speech for such knowledge was enough to make them serve as ship-sarkārs banians and writers and ultimately win for them colossal fortunes. Thus although the study of English was sought for no systematic course of instruction was given or required, and for a time a low and broken English or half English and half Bengali gibberish was spoken of which humorous specimens may be found in

*Long Hand-Book to Bengal Missions*, pp. 441-451. But see *Good Old Days* vol. I, p. 593 et seq.

Rāj-nārāyan Basu's delightful little sketch of that time. Sometimes, to eke out this half-diction, gesture-language was used, somewhat in the manner in which Gulliver spoke to the Lilliputians.

The state of Bengali education, if not in a worse, was at least in no better plight. The mass of Bengali manuscripts recently unearthed by patient investigations of modern scholars was mostly unknown, and the literature of the time, possessing hardly any printed books, consisted chiefly of a handful of works, *Manasā*, *Dharmamangal*, *Mahābhārat* of *Kāśidās*, *Rāmāyan* of *Kṛttibās*, *Chandī* of *Kabī-kankan*, *Annadāmangal* of *Bhāiat-chandīa*, and probably the songs of *Rām-piāsād*. The only works which were read in the *Pāth-sālās*, we learn on the authority of the biographer of *Rām-kamal Sen*<sup>1</sup>, were *Guṇḍakṣinā* and the rules of arithmetic by *Śubhankar*. There were neither good schools nor were there proper elementary text-books for purposes of instruction, and even a decade later, this was one of the initial difficulties which the School Society felt in carrying out its worthy object of Bengali education. Such was the state of Bengali learning at this time that we learn from a writer in the *Friend of India*<sup>2</sup> "If they can *write* at all, each character, to say nothing of orthography, is made in so irregular and indistinct a manner, that comparatively few of them could read what is written by another and some of them can scarcely wade through that has been written by themselves, after any lapse of time. If they have learnt to *read*, they can

<sup>1</sup> Pearychand Mitra, *Life of Ramkomul Sen* (1880), p. 7

<sup>2</sup> vol. II, p. 392, quoted in *Cal. Rev.* vol. XIII, 1850 p. 132. See also *Quarterly Friend of India*, vol. IV p. 152. This remark is confirmed by what Forster says in the Introduction to his *Vocabulary* with regard to the uncertainty of Bengali spelling and Bengali script.

seldom read five words together without stopping to make out the syllables and often scarcely two even when the writing is legible. The case is precisely the same with the knowledge of *figures*." These observations however, coming as they do perhaps from a missionary whose personal knowledge of the country and its inhabitants might not perhaps have extended beyond narrow limits must be taken subject to this reservation that although this might be the picture of the general state of knowledge and culture at this time, yet there still lived in dignified isolation a few learned pundits in the remote villages and that the days of Sanscrit learning were not quite over. But even these Brāhmans with a few exceptions were now as we have stated a fallen race and the exclusive genius of Brāhmanism in its lowest phase not only barred the masses from the temple of knowledge but also made themselves neglect the vernacular as 'Prakrit' dialect fit only for demons and women." So far indeed had they carried their contempt for their mother tongue that while they cultivated the learned language with assiduity they in many instances, prided themselves on writing the language of the people with inaccuracy and sometimes in an almost unintelligible semi barbaric sanscritised style. We shall see some specimens of the latter kind even in the writings of the more accomplished Pundits of the Fort William College. It is natural to expect that these so-called pundits should strenuously discourage the use of the vernacular among the people and set their face against its improvement. The neglect of the vernaculars especially Bengali had reached such a stage that when Dr Carey began to lecture at Fort William College he could hardly muster a class and the same learned doctor when he visited Nadiyā, not many years ago the illustrious centre of Bengali language and literature he could not discover



more than 40 separate works, all in manuscripts, as the whole literature of 30,000,000 of people up to that time"<sup>1</sup>

The state of learning in Bengal may not be unfitly compared to that in England after the ravages of the Danes, of which King Alfred said "there was a time when people came to this island for instruction, now we must get it from abroad, if we want it" For, under this state of things, it is obvious that no impetus coming from within,

if improvement is to be effected, it must come from outside When we picture to ourselves adventurers, ne'er-

do-wells, plain townsfolk and country-folk, peaceful homestay-ers in the remote villages and commercial banians in the crowded cities, and later on, well-to-do English gentlemen pushing their way up the river, laying out broad plantations and sultanising over the whole neighbourhood, we can hardly expect any manifestation of the literary genius in such an environment With the mental and physical absorption incident upon social and political disorders in the country, with no metropolis to furnish the needed contact of mind with mind, with repressive material needs causing large drain upon one's physical energy, and above all, with the decay of artistic impulses and literary traditions, it is no wonder that the nation produced little literature and developed little culture of importance The impulse at length came from outside We cannot but acknowledge with feelings of mingled shame and grateful-

ness that the first and earliest efforts at ameliorating our condition were made by a handful of philanthropic Europeans, both civilians and missionaries, who in their

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *op cit*, p 202

liberal views moved far ahead of their age. In spite of the Cornwallis Code and the public policy of exclusion the ruler and the ruled had begun to live in greater amity and fellow feeling. With the assumption of the responsibilities of political government the ruling classes began to take greater interest in the lives of the people committed to their care. In vain do we seek in modern Bengal philanthropists of the type of Colvin Palmer Carey Marshman and David Hare whose memory is still gratefully cherished by the Bengali-speaking race. No doubt the Company's servants hitherto had never regarded India as their home but they had been always sojourners in a far country whose only ambition was to obtain riches as soon as possible and return home as gentlemen of leisure. This was one of the underlying causes of the constant disputes between the Company and its self-seeking agents and it is no wonder that throughout the 18th century constant complaints of corruption peculation and general dishonesty of the agents are to be found in the Letter Books of the Company. But with stability of British rule when commercialism was declining as a dominating factor in the Company's policy and with the realisation of greater administrative responsibility this order of things was gradually changing. Two obvious reasons naturally strengthened the ties which bound these foreigners to this country. The first is that in those days of weary and perilous voyage round the Cape men who came out to India and had a taste for the easy going (sometimes reckless) life of pleasure and profit in the tropics had no mind to return home very soon while in the next place, the

The couplet goes thus (quoted in Rāj nārāyaṇ Bhaṭṭa's *Ekāl O Śalāl*):  
 হোয়া কবিন্দ শাহরত কেরী দারিদ্রতন। পক ঘোরা অরেকিতঃ দংশিতকদাশন॥

number of Europeans who lived here was very small and they consisted mostly of officials, for not only was the climate unsuitable to Europeans generally<sup>1</sup> but the policy of the government also regarded the introduction of free-trade and Europeans to be dangerous to the safety of the newly acquired empire. But whatever might be the reason, there is no gainsaying the fact that most of these Europeans, who had lived here for a long time, had a genuine affection for the country, and some of them went so far as to adopt the manners and customs and even the dress of the Bengali population. Enjoying the *hooka*, whose "long ornamental snake coiled round and round the rails of the chair" was one of the customs, among others, immortalised by Thackeray, which was long fashionable<sup>2</sup> with these official and non-official 'Nabobs', and it would surprise many a modern reader to learn that it even fascinated the ladies, on whose part "it was considered a high compliment to show a preference for a gentleman by tasting his *hooka*"

Besides this affection of the early European settlers for their land of adoption, which prompted them to express themselves occasionally in its language, there were other purely political and utilitarian grounds which

Study of Bengali by  
European settlers

<sup>1</sup> Cf Sir Philip Francis's impressions of his residence in this country. Macaulay, writing after 60 years with the experience of a much improved country, speaks almost in the same strain in his characteristically sweeping way.

<sup>2</sup> A picture of this custom and manner of life is preserved for us in the pages of the immortal *Ālālar Gharer Dulāl*. We read in Carey's *Dialogues* (3rd Ed. 1818, p. 3) that one of the indispensably necessary servant of the Englishman's household was a hookabardar or a man to prepare his *hooka*. Stavorinus (vol. 1, 345) also relates how on the occasion of his visit to Governor Cartier at Calcutta, he was treated with the *hooka* at an orientally sumptuous banquet given in his honour. See also Busted, *op cit* p. 157, *Good Old Days*, vol. 1. 63

induced them to the study and encouragement of the vernacular. Time was coming when Bengali should both officially as well as popularly be the recognised vernacular and both Halhed and Forster the two earliest important European writers in Bengali rightly insist at some length upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing

Persian as the language of the Court

Its political and  
utilitarian ground and the market place and advocate  
more wide-spread and general use of

Bengali in its place. Exigencies of administration which had made it almost obligatory for the governors to learn the language of the governed hastened this movement towards the neglected vernacular. The missionaries, on the other hand found out early that if they were to reach the people directly they must first learn their language and gain a thorough knowledge of their modes of thinking and feeling. Systematic mission work always presupposed a thorough training in their language. All these and other reasons first impelled the early European settlers to take to a systematic study of the neglected vernacular. When therefore with the disappearance of the old Bengali writers Bengali literature had been sent adrift to shift for itself as best as it could it was taken up and fostered by strangers hailing from distant lands whom fortunately political personal or utilitarian reasons if not always the love of the language or the literature itself first urged to its elaborate study under entirely new conditions.

This brief and necessarily incomplete picture of the general state of this country from 1760 to 1800 will to

some extent, exhibit the new conditions under which modern Bengali literature first came into being. The instability and perturbation consequent upon these political

Concluding remarks  
on the significance of  
the general history of  
the time to its literary  
history

changes as well as the almost entire disintegration of social solidarity will no doubt explain the external circumstances which retarded the growth of literature, but the literature itself since the days of Bhārat-chandīa had been showing inherent signs of exhaustion and decay, which was only hastened, instead of being checked, by political and social revolutions. The necessarily slow and laborious process of reconstruction which followed upon these vicissitudes absorbed men's mind for more than half a century from 1800. This will explain not only why we do not come across any great and important writer before we reach the age of Michael or Bankim but it will also exhibit very clearly how literary movements in Bengal had perforce been closely bound up with political, social, religious, and other movements in the first half of the 19th century. Every great writer of this period of transition was of necessity a politician, a social reformer, and a religious enthusiast. We need hardly cite, for illustration, the long list of such important names as those of Rām-mohan Rāy, Kṛṣṇamohan Bandṛopādhyay, Aksay Datta, Debendranāth Thākurī, Īśvarī-chandra Bīdyāsāgar, Tek-chānd, or Rājendralal Mitra. Even in the next generation Bankim-chandīa could not keep himself entirely free from this universal tendency. Politics, social reform, and religious revival went hand in hand with literary creation. From 1825 to 1858, if not in the period actually under review in this volume, we shall have to

*Literary movements in the 19th century closely bound up with political, social, and other movements*

extend our vision and include in our consideration various aspects of national history other than the one which is merely literary. To treat Bengali

Literature in the 19th century as a series of isolated phenomenon is to give a wrong historical perspective, for here, as everywhere, literary thought and

contemporary events are two inseparable aspects of national history. It is true that during the period between 1800 and 1825 with which more specially the present enquiry is concerned these tendencies did not come into such bold relief as in the period immediately following upon it, yet for the understanding of the general drift, the historian of literature must from the beginning keep in view the relation of literature to the political and social history of the time and thus apart from all reference to the theory of the insensible moulding of the literary mind and art by the considerations of race time or circumstance will sufficiently make clear the necessity of devoting tedious pages to a general description of the state of this country at the outset of our literary history.

The immediate effect of the political and social vicissitudes of the second half of the eighteenth century was depreciating in the extreme. The old Bengali literature which had been subsiding gradually into decrepitude and decay practically disappeared. The Kabiwalas, the few isolated writers in the old style the authors of *Pāñjikālī* and the host of inferior imitators of Bhāratachandra had no doubt kept up the continuity of literary

history and maintained, even with declining powers the ancient trend of thought and feeling. But it was an age not conspicuous for the appreciation of high ideas nor for

Absence of literary ventures in the first period of our history how to be explained.

any great enthusiasm for literary ventures. The decadence in spite of these belated efforts of an inferior if not an insignificant, band of writers was rapidly hastened and the necessity of an external stimulus which alone could have given a new lease of life to the declining literature was urgently felt. Such an external stimulus was not forthcoming until sometime had elapsed and tranquillity

had been attained, until the rich and plentiful literature of the West, which under the peculiar circumstances was alone capable of furnishing the needed impetus, had been made accessible to the literary men of Bengal. In the meantime, the alien rulers of Bengal, brought up in the habits of unchecked power and in the ignorance and passion of an adventurous life, cared little for culture or literature. The general people of the country, among whom literary traditions and aspirations had been all but extinct or had not found scope for free play, were apathetic to literary culture and devoted their attentions, in this troublesome time, to the more urgent and engrossing material necessities of life. The first

Necessity of a new generation of the general intellectual life in the country before a renewal of literature could be made possible

step, therefore, that had to be taken, before literary venture could be possible, was towards diffusion of knowledge, spread of education, and promotion of literary tendencies.

The first half of the 19th century, therefore, was entirely taken up in the realisation of these objects. It was necessary to prepare text-books, to translate standard works from foreign languages, to reprint older classics from inaccessible manuscripts, and in this way generally to furnish a leaven for elevating the decaying intellectual life of the country. This was the work chiefly of the foreign writers in Bengal and their colleagues, the

Importance of the work of the European writers in this respect.

Pundits of the Fort William College, who were pioneers in various departments of vernacular writing and who wrote, not with any personal literary

ambition but with the more modest yet useful object of promoting general education. To their efforts, therefore, we chiefly owe, in a very practical sense, if not the regeneration of our literature, at least the regeneration of

intellectual activities in the country. It is not in the least degree correct to say as it has been often enthusiastically said that it is the missionary especially Dr Carey, who created modern Bengali Literature. The creation of modern literary Bengali covers a period of more than half a century from Carey's time and literary style in the strict sense of the term was not attained until a generation later when a band of youthful Bengali writers had come into the field equipped in all the wealth of the new knowledge. It is true indeed

Impetus given to the spread of education and general culture

that the missionaries gave an impetus to vernacular writing when it was generally neglected. But at the

same time it must be borne in mind that we cannot fasten the parentage of modern Bengali upon the missionaries only much less upon Dr Carey alone and that literature was never the sole object of the European writers but education or evangelisation. If their work fostered literature it was not due to any definite intention on their part to do so but it was an incidental result of what they had done for the revival of education in Bengal. A national literature whether ancient or modern is the outcome of a long process of development and even Carey himself had realised very early that in spite of the efforts of the foreigners the best way of building up such a literature would be inducing the children of the soil themselves to take to earnest literary work. The missionary even if he is a talented man like Carey did hardly produce anything strictly deserving the name of literature. The importance of the missionary work in Bengali does not lie in this the literature of to-day is work not of Carey Halhed or Forster but of the people of the soil of Mityunjay of Rām mohan of Bankim-chandra of Michael Madhusūdan. The missionaries, however, did a great work in the first



quarter of the nineteenth century in supplying the needed impetus to education by founding schools, writing elementary school-books, and diffusing knowledge through the medium of Bengali all which however had a more wide and far-reaching effect than what they were actually intended to produce

We may resent this foreign intrusion at the outset of our history but under the circumstances and in the environment such as they were, it could not have been otherwise No doubt, the hour had come for such a regeneration and reconstruction Had

Foreign intrusion  
under the circum-  
stances unavoidable,  
its good effects

there been no foreign workers in the field, the work, however delayed, would not certainly have remained in abeyance But the missionaries were the first to take up the work in right earnest, and, in this respect, the importance of these early half-forgotten foreign writers can never be exaggerated Of course, as in all early periods of literary history, the work done here chiefly consisted of translation and adaptation, yet it must be admitted that there is hardly any department of useful knowledge which these European writers did not touch It is true that they could not adorn whatever they touched, but when we consider the large number of workers in the field Carey, Marshman, Waid, Haughton, Yates, Morton, Pearson, Mack, Pearce, Miller, Hailey, May, Stewart, to mention at random a few of the more well-known then earnest philanthropic zeal, then unflagging diligence, the extraordinary variety, extent and influence of their writings, we cannot surely speak lightly of these pioneer writers

It is easier to disclaim foreign influence and talk of independence than actually to attain it The literary history of Bengal in the 19th century is really the history

of the influence of European ideas on Bengali thought

We can indeed dismiss without much

Contact with the West and Influence of western ideas on modern literature      serious loss the early European writers, who had certainly their own ulterior objects in their assiduous study of the vernacular and whose writings

considered as literature possess little or no intrinsic merit

But we cannot dismiss so easily those immaterial immigrants known as influences which came in with the first European settler in the land and brought on by degrees a conflict and a revolution in our ideas and modes of life

When necessity had brought the East and the West side by side it would be idle to quote Kipling's famous dictum of the unchanging East or assert ourselves independent of all contact or influence

What the European writers did for the spread and acceptance of these ideas.      of western ideas

The pioneer efforts of the missionary and the school master for diffusing knowledge and culture through the medium of

Bengali had surely a more wide-reaching effect than that of giving temporary impetus to dormant intellectual or literary activities for the literature which had been brought into being through the influence of western ideas was only one effect of a vaster revolution in thought manners and religion which had taken place in this country through our contact with the West

It is out of this conflict of the eastern with the western ideals that our modern literature has grown and the rude early efforts of the missionary and the school master by propagating western ideas had paved the way for this peculiar development of culture and literature in Bengal

It is with the missionary and the school master therefore, that we must begin our study of the history of this national progress as reflected through the vernacular literature

It is they who have laid the

foundations upon which the vast fabric of present-day literature is based, and every historical survey must equally embrace and define the place of the pioneer who did the spade-work as well as that of the mature litterateur who wins the laurel-wreath of later glories

## CHAPTER III

### EARLIEST EUROPEAN WRITERS

It is not before the firm establishment of the British rule in Bengal in the beginning of the 19th century that the early European settlers came in touch with Bengali language and literature. Before this there is no trace of systematic effort in this direction although several works have been discovered which belong to a period earlier than 1800. Of these works it is not easy however to determine with certainty what Anglo-Bengali writing can claim the distinction of being the first publication by a European writer. Grierson in two papers in the *Journal and*

*Proceedings* of the Asiatic Society of Bengal<sup>1</sup> holds that the so-called Bengali rendering of the Lord's Prayer

in Chamberlayne's *Sylloge* published in 1715 is perhaps the earliest extant attempt at Bengali composition by a European writer. This *Sylloge* is a collection of translations of the Lord's Prayer into various languages prepared by John Chamberlayne and David Wilkins. This work actually

contains a plate purporting to represent a translation in Bengali which is headed "Bengalica." But it has been shown

Early isolated attempts.

*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* vol. xlii, 1893 p. 42ff. and *Proceedings* of the same Society 1893 p. 89. The plate is given in the *Proceedings*. See also Grierson, *Linguistic Survey* vol. v pt. i p. 23. The characters are hardly Bengali.

that this unintelligible jargon is not Bengali at all and Wilkins himself confesses in the preface to that work that he had been unable to obtain a Bengali rendering (which language he thought to be all but extinct<sup>1</sup>) but that he had written a Malay version in the so-called Bengali character Grierson also mentions<sup>1</sup> that in the *Orientalisch-und-occidentalischer Sprachmeister* compiled by Johann Friedrich Fritz (Leipzig, 1748), the Bengali alphabet given as a specimen is said to have been taken from the *Aurneeb Szeb* apparently a life of a Aurangzeb, by Georg Jacob Kehr But of this latter book no trace remains

Leaving aside these isolated and tentative efforts, real attempt at sustained Bengali composition did not begin till the time when the Portuguese, before the English, had begun to establish themselves in Bengal

The Portuguese in Bengal The Portuguese, by 1530, had settled in many parts of this country and carried on an extensive trade in the chief sea-ports The number of people claiming themselves to be of Portuguese descent was in the 17th century very large and Portuguese language had established itself as the *lingua franca* of the country<sup>2</sup> Among these Portuguese adventurers and pirates, however, we can never expect any serious attempt at literary composition but the Portuguese missionaries seem to have done some work in this direction Bernier,<sup>3</sup> about 1660, speaks of "Portugal fathers and missionaries" in Bengal and says that in Bengal there are

<sup>1</sup> Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, loc cit

<sup>2</sup> The Portuguese language has bequeathed a large number of expressions to the vernacular tongue

<sup>3</sup> *Travels*, p 27

to be found not less than eight or nine thousand families of Frangus Portugals. Indeed there is enough evidence to show that Roman Catholic Mission some of Portuguese origin had at this time its centre in

Roman Catholic and many parts of Bengal and that it had Portuguese Missionaries extended its activity from Balasore and Hughli to Chittagong and

Dacca.<sup>1</sup> from the records left by these missionaries it seems that these Catholic missionaries like their Protestant or Dissenting successors in the next century did not neglect to mix with the people of Bengal and learn their language. In 1683 Father Marcos Antonio Satucci S J the superior of the Mission among these Bengali converts between 1679 and 1684 writes thus

The fathers have not failed in their duty they have learned the language well have composed vocabularies a

grammar a confessionary and prayers they have translated the Christian doctrine etc. nothing of which existed till now.<sup>2</sup> Hosten mentions another early allusion to translational work undertaken in Bengal in a letter of Francis Fernandez dated Siripur a town of Bengalla<sup>3</sup> January 17 1590 where it is stated that

Fath Hosten S J of the St Xavier's College Calcutta, has been giving interesting accounts of these missions and missionaries in the *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (Feb 1911) and *Bengal Past and Present*

O Chronica de Tuary Goa. 1518 p 12, quoted by Hosten in *Bengal Past and Present* vol. ix, pt i. This Church still exists. It was twice burnt down and rebuilt. Its records I am glad to understand, have all perished in the fire.

Siripur we learn from an article (*Portuguese in India*) in *Col. Rev.* vol. v 1840 is situated 18 miles south of Sonergang in Dacca and was in the 16th century an extensive Portuguese settlement. It is modern Siripur. See Jati-dramohan Rly. Dhul. It has a pop. of 1 p 839

Fernandez composed a small treatise explaining summarily the points of the Christian religion and a small catechism in the form of a dialogue. Father Dominic De Souza translated both these works into the "Bengalla" tongue.<sup>1</sup> In *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*,<sup>2</sup> Father Barbier, as early as 1723, mentions that he prepared a little catechism in Bengali. From these and other references, it is not hazardous to conclude that these Portuguese missionaries, like Carey and Marshman of a later age, though on a modest scale, must have created and left behind them an interesting body of Portuguese-Bengali literature. Of this Portuguese-Bengali literature, little trace remains. Of the few extant writings of a distinctly Portuguese origin, three works, all purported to be written or edited by Manoel da Assumpção, Rector of Missão de Santa Nicolao de Tolentino deserve mention.

All these works are supposed to have been written at Nagori, Bhawal, near Dacca. It has already been mentioned that the Portuguese missionaries had a centre at Dacca, where the existence of a church has been mentioned by Père Barbier in the *Lettres Edifiantes*. Tavernier,

<sup>1</sup> *Bengal Past and Present*, July to December, 1910, p. 220, quoting *Extrait de Lettres du P. Nicolas Pimenta*. Anvers, Trognesse, 1601. Nicholas Pimenta was a Jesuit missionary of Goa (Visiteur de la Compagnie de Jesus en l'Inde l'an 1598). He sent these two missionaries, Francois Fernandez and Dominic (or Dominique) Sosa, to Bengal, from whose letters to Pimenta we get some account of contemporary Bengal and the Portuguese Missions at Siripur and elsewhere. See Peire Du Jarric, *Histoire des Indes Orientales* 1610, chap. xxix, also xxx to xxxiii. Also see Nicolao Pimenta, *Relatio Historica de rebus in India Orientali*. Anno MDCI. See Beveridge, *Baharganj*, p. 29 and other references.

<sup>2</sup> Lettre de Père Barbier, Missionnaire de la Compagnie de Jesus, La Mission de Carnate, January 15, 1723, in *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*. Nouvelle Ed. Memoires de Indes tome xiii, 1781, p. 278.

about 1620 states that Dacca has a church of the Augustinians a very stately pile ' ' Portuguese Church at Dacca and Hosten in his papers on Roman Catholic Missions and Missionaries gives interesting accounts from original records of this Missão de S. Nicolao Tolentino near Bhawal Dacca.<sup>2</sup>

Manoel da Assumpção a native of Evora and an Augustinian friar of the Congregação da Índia Oriental was the Rector of this Mission. Of his life and labours nothing definite is known but he seems to have been a zealous missionary and composed two books and edited one in Bengali. His two works in Bengali with the object of affording facilities to the missionaries in their Bengali discussions with the Bramenes and Gentoos.<sup>3</sup>

Of these three works his earliest composition seems to have been what Father Thirso Lopes in his note to Hosten's paper<sup>4</sup> calls an Abridgment of the Mysteries of Faith (*Compendio dos mysterios da fee ordenado em lingua Bengalla pelo P. Fr*

Tavernier's *Tarads* ed. Ball Lond n, 1880 vol. i. p. 128

References given in The other centres of these Augustinian mission ries in Bengal was the Convent of N. Senhora do Rosario of Ugalim (H. gill) in Be. gah.

Father Hosten states (*Bengal Past and Present* vol. i. pt. i. p. 4.) that he has been informed that MSs of these works are now in the Public Library of Evora.

Quoted in note (4) above. Father Lopes's authorities, in addition to Barbosa Machado and Osalper are *Catalogo dos Manuscritos da Bibliotheca Publica Eboense* ordenado pelo Bibliothecario Joaquim II Modoro da Cunha Rivara, t. i. p. 345; Silva, *Diccionario Bibliographico Portuguez* t. p. 387; Bonifacio Moral *Revista La Ciudad de Dios* t. 37 pp. 433-34. Unfortunately these books are not available here.



Manoel da Assumpção) A little worm-eaten and partly mutilated copy of this work<sup>1</sup> exists in the Library of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The running title is

*Crepas Xartier Orthobhed* or *Cathe-*  
*Cismo da Doutrina Christaú* The  
*Orthobhed* or *Cathecismo*  
*da Doutrina Christaú* copy in the Asiatic Society is want-

ing in the title-page, but an interesting certificate of publication in Portuguese is inserted at the beginning from which we learn that it was completed on August 28, 1731. It is dated from a place named Ba( )l,<sup>2</sup> which appears to be Bhawal from a reference at page 2 of the book itself, where Nagori also is mentioned. It might have been, as Father Lopes suggests on the authority of Barbosa Machado,<sup>3</sup> printed at Lisbon by Francisco da Silva (Silva) in 1743 but unfortunately the loss of the title-page deprives us of the most certain means of corroborating this suggestion.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> An account of this work on the basis of this copy was read by me at the Bangiya Sahitya Parishat on Sept 24, 1916. The paper is published in the *Patikā* (vol 23, p 179) of the same Society, which see for detailed information.

<sup>2</sup> The Preface, as we have it now, is in places worm eaten. This is what can be deciphered:

Certifico eu Fr Manoel da / Assumpção, Rector da Mis(s)ão de  
 S Nicolao Tolentino e/ (re)ctor deste compendio, (e)star o( ) /  
 compendio tresladado no pe (da) / letia assim o Bengalla como o/ (Po)-  
 rtuguez e certifico mais ser es( ) / Doutrina que os naturaes mais/  
 tendem, e entre todas a mais/ (pu)rificada de erros, em fe de que/ esta  
 Certidao, e se necessario/ a juro *In Verbo Sacerdotis* Ba/(ra)l nos  
 28 de Agosto de 1734 Fr Manoel da Assumpção

<sup>3</sup> *Bibliotheca Lusitana Historica Critica e Chronologica*, t iii, p 183, col ii

<sup>4</sup> Bunnell (*A Tentative List of Portuguese Books and Manuscripts* 1880) also gives 1743 and Lisbon as the date and place of publication (s v Manoel da Assumpção) his authorities being Barbosa Machado and Ossinger (*Bibliotheca Augustiniana*, p 84). Ossinger gives the title as *Cathecismus doctrinae Christianae per modum dialogi*.

The book is composed in both Portuguese and Bengali the former version appearing on the rectos and the latter on the versos of the pages. The whole is in Roman character (Bengali characters having been non-existent) the word being transliterated according to the rules of Portuguese pronunciation. This method of transliteration is not only curious but also noteworthy being one of the earliest of its kind and having much value in the study of the phonetics of the Bengali language as it existed two centuries ago.<sup>1</sup>

The book attempts at an exhaustive explanation of the whole Christian doctrine in the form of a dialogue between a *Teacher* and a *Disciple* (Signa) or *Receptor* and *Disciple* based on the slight conceit of an imaginary travel to Bhawal. There are interspersed throughout short stories to illustrate moral principles. The content of the work will be apparent from the following account of the division of the work and headings of each chapter. The whole is divided into two books entitled *Part I* and *Part II*.

*Part I* (pp. 2-313) *Vo(col) oner ortho along*  
*Prothoghne prothoghne buzhan*

*Tazel I* (pp. 2-18)—*Nidhi crucer orthobhed* (Sign  
of the Cross)

*II* (pp. 19-359q) *Pitar Paron along talan ortho*  
(Our Father and explanation thereof)

*III* (pp. 360-497q) This part is wanting in several pages not known at what page it begins and what its title is. The subject seems to be Hail Mary and Rosary.

Professor S. N. Kumar Chatterji read a paper on this point at a meeting of the Society of the Faculty of Arts at Calcutta on 10th April 1916 which I published in the *Patrika* of the same Society (1922 vol. 23, p. 107).

IV (pp 77-136) Mani xotto Nuanzan, Axthai choudo bhed ebong tahandiguer oitho (The Creed and Articles of Faith and explanation thereof)

V (pp 137-211) Dos Agguia, ebong tahandiguer oitho (Ten Commandments and explanation thereof)

VI (pp 215-272) Pans Agguia, ebong tahandiguer oitho (Five Commandments of the Church and explanation thereof)

VII (pp 273-313) Xat Sacramentos, ebong tahandiguer oitho (Seven Sacraments and explanation thereof)

*Puthi II* (pp 314-380) Poion xattro xocol, ai ze uehit zanite xoigue zaibai (Explanation of the whole doctrine and what a Christian must know)

Tazel I (pp 314-356) Axthai bhed bichai xotto coria xiqhibai xiqhaibar upae taibai (Mysteries of the Faith)

II (pp 356-380) Poion Xastro nrala (Prayers of the doctrine) <sup>1</sup>

There are two songs in *Puthi II* one at p 348 headed "Cantiga sobre os mysterios de fe orthobhedei dhoimo guit" (Song on the mysteries of Faith), and the other at p 353 headed "Cantiga Ao Menino Jesus recém nacido Baloq Jesuzer guit zoimo xttane xora" (Song on infant Jesus newly born)

The book may be interesting as an early explanation of the Roman Catholic doctrine but its chief value, to

<sup>1</sup> The copy, as we have it, is probably incomplete for p 380 is not apparently the end of the book and some pages seem to have been lost there after. The copy also wants the title page, pp 33 48, 155 158, 321 336, pp 371 372 incl and all after p 380

an historian of Bengali literature lies in its being the first important and sustained Bengali composition by a European author<sup>1</sup>. It gives us the earliest specimen of Missionary Bengali as it had existed about a century and a half before Carey, Marshman and their colleagues took the field and its Bengali is certainly more homely and well written than the stiff and groping language of Carey's *Dharmapustak*. One is tempted to quote specimens at greater length from this interesting work but space forbids quotation of more than one or two illustrative extracts<sup>2</sup>.

Father Guérin who brought out the edition of this work from Obaldanagar in 1830 states in the Latin preface that edition that the Portuguese portion only was written by M. Noel, while the Bengali portion was the work of some Bengali Christian at Bhawal. But of this there is no evidence. Father Guérin's edition, a copy of which was lent to me by Father J. Wauters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dharmatala Calcutta is interesting though its Bengali is certainly not so remarkable. It is published in Bengali characters and named কৃষ্ণার শাস্ত্রের অর্থ (not চরিত). It is entirely re-written and remodelled and there is a Latin preface. Nearly two-thirds of the original is expanded as being pœcaphal and objectionable while three new dialogues are added, also a list of solar and lunar eclipses calculated for Bengal from 1816 to 1904. The scope and contents of the work will be sufficiently explained by its title *Catéchisme / suivi de trois dialogues / et d'une liste / des Eclipses de soleil et de lune / calculées pour la Bengale à partir de 1816 jusqu'en 1904 inclusivement. / Nouvelle édition revue et corrigée*. কৃষ্ণার শাস্ত্রের অর্থ (১৮৩০) / দুইয়ের আর চত্বরের গ্রন্থ গণনার সহিত ১৮৩০ বৎসরের / আরও ১৮৩৬ সাল অবধি / সহর চন্দন নগর / এবং সবত বাঙ্গালা দেশের নিধি ৪ / করিয়াছেন আকবর জাহাঙ্গীর মাহির। বেহেন / চন্দন নগরের সর্বপ্রকার পাণ্ডা / বিতরণের এবং তৎকালে ঐরাসপুরে মুদ্রিত হইল। / সম ১৮৩৬ / It is interesting to note that Father Guérin himself was an assiduous student of Astronomy and published after his return to England a work on Indian Astronomy in 1847.

For other specimens, see my paper in the *Banglapa Sāhitya Prasang Patrika* (1823 vol 23 p 170)

*Hail Mary*

Pionam Maria / Ciepaē puñit, / 'Tomatē Tahacui  
 assen / Dhoim̃i tom̃i / Xocol x̃tin  
 Specimens of its loquei moidh / Dhoimo pho' / 'Toma  
 language and style udoie / Jesus / Xidha Maria /  
 Poiomexoiēi Mata / Xadho amoia papu caion / Eghone,  
 ai / Amaidigui mutui calé / Amen Jesus

The second extract is a story illustrating the efficacy of the Cross in warding off the powers of evil

*Guru* Boio Anchoizio cotha cohila emot hce ai coho,  
 xidhi ciux corile Bhutei cumoti ni dui zaé?

*Xirio* Hoe bhutei cumoti dui zae, ebong Bhute o  
 polae Ehi xonai pioman xono

Eq̃iahoĩl meñ assilo, tahare Bhute bazi dia cohiló tui  
 zodi amai nophoi hoite chah̃x, am̃i toie oneq dhan dil̃am̃  
 Racolae cohiló, bhalo, tomai dax hoibo tom̃i amaré dhon  
 dibá Bhute cohilo, tabe amar golam hoile toi uehit  
 nohe dhoimo ghaire zaite, ebong xidhi Ciux ai codachitio  
 coribi na, emot ze coie xe amai golam, ehi amai  
 agguia, taha palon coribi, emot zodi na corix, tomaie  
 boutthbotth taiona dibam Raqhoale cohilo zaha agguia  
 coio, taha coribo, zodi emot na cori, tomai ze iccha,  
 xei hoibeg

Oneq din obhaguia Raqhoale bhutei xac̃i coriló, tahai  
 poi eq̃ din muñxio bol coria reqholaque dhoia dhoimo  
 ghore loia guelo Dhoimo ghore eq̃ Pad̃i assilen, xei  
 boio xadhu tui loq xocolere cohilen Tomaia iaqhoaler  
 upoie xidhi Ciux corió Emot loq xocolē corilo Toqhon  
 bhute boiό coid coria iaqhoaleiá oneq taiona dite  
 laguilo Eha deg̃hia Pad̃ie iaqhoálque dhoilen, bhuteie  
 tuoná díte mana corilen Tobe Bhute aio bex coid  
 coria Pad̃inē cohiló, Ehi muñxio amai dax, amai  
 agguia bhanguilo, tahare xaxtti dibai uehit tahare

eria deo na tomare o xatti dibam Padri colulen tahare  
 eria dibo na amare zaha corite parix taha coró Tolé  
 bluté emot eumontro corilo ze Padrir muqh beca hoilo  
 Eha deqhix loq xocolé ghore polain guelo

Toqhou Padri xidhi crux corilen ebong muqh xidhi  
 hoilo Tahar par ar Crux corilén raqhoaler upore ebong  
 Crux coria Bluté polain guelo Raqhoale o calax hoilo  
 calax hoia tahar xocol oporid confessor corilo Nirmol  
 dhormo o bloeti rupe loilo ebong punorbar jnilo ze crepa  
 hamaasilo pap caria

The second important work of Manoel da Assumpção  
 which deserves mention as being perhaps the first grammar  
 and dictionary in the Bengali language

*Vocab l r em  
 Id oia Be gall e Portu  
 g ez first Be gall  
 grammar a d dictioa  
 ry 1743*

is entitled *Vocabulario em Idioma  
 Bengalla e Portugue l dividido em  
 lra e partes* published at Lisbon in  
 1743 This book is not easily avail-

able here but it is mentioned in the Catalogue of the  
 British Museum and Grierson in his *Linguistic Survey*<sup>2</sup>  
 has given a short account of this notable work In the  
 first forty pages of the *Vocabulario* is given a compendium  
 of Bengali grammar the rest of the book being divided  
 into two parts viz vocabulary Bengali Portuguese pp  
 47-306 and Portuguese-Bengali pp 307-577 Like the  
 last mentioned work *Calceclamo* it is written throughout  
 in Roman character the words again being spelt according  
 to the rules of Portuguese pronunciation

The full title is this *Vocabulario em Idioma Be galla  
 Portuguez, dividido n dua partes dedcad o E cellente Re er  
 Senhor D F Migu l de Ta ora Arcebispo d E ra do Concelho d  
 sua Magestade Foy delligencia d Padre Fr Manoel da Assumpçam  
 Religioo Eremita do Santo Agostinho da Congregação da I dia  
 Orient l Lisboa, l 43* A facsimile of this title page is gi n i  
 BĀṅgālĀ Sāmāyik Śāhity by Kedārnāth Maj mdar vol i 1917 p 1<sup>st</sup>  
 vol pt i p 23

Besides these two original works, a third is also said to be associated with the name of Manoel. The existence of this book was first made known by Father Thuro Lopez of Valladolid, Spain, in his note contributed to

Father Hosten's paper in the *Bengal Past and Present* (vol ix pt 1, p 41)

Don Antonio's *Catechism* in Bengali, 1743

The note runs thus "A Catechism of the Christian Doctrine in the form of a dialogue. It was printed in 8vo at Lisbon in 1743 by Francisco da Silva. The contents are: A discussion about the Law between a Christian Catholic Roman, and a Bramene or Master of the Gentoos. It shows in the Bengalla tongue the falsity of the Gentoo sect and the infallible truth of our holy Roman Catholic faith, in which alone is the way of salvation and the knowledge of God's true Law. Composed by the son of the King of Busna, Don Antonio,<sup>1</sup> that great Christian Catechist, who converted so many Gentoos, it was translated into Portuguese by Father Frey Manoel da Assumpção, a native of the city of Evora, and a member of the Indian Congregation of the Hermits of St Augustine, actually Rector of the Bengalla Mission, his object being to facilitate to the Missionaries their discussions in the said tongue with the Bramenes and Gentoos. It is a dialogue between the Roman Catholic and the Gentoo Bramene. Written in two columns, Bengala and Portuguese."

<sup>1</sup> Hosten, in the *Bengal Past and Present*, loc cit, gives an account of this semi-legendary figure from *O Chronista de Tisuanay*, vol ii 1867, pp 57-58. In the year 1663, a son of the King of Busna was taken prisoner by the Mogós and led to Airacaó, when one of the Fathers, Manoel do Rozario, ransomed him and converted him to Roman Catholic Christianity. After his conversion, he was called Don Antonio de Rozario, after St Anthony who is said to have appeared to him in a dream.

From the above account, it will be seen that although there is evidence enough to show that the Roman Catholic missionaries at one time were very active in this country especially in Eastern Bengal yet not much trace is left of their direct or indirect connexion with the language or literature of the country. Indeed before Carey missionaries confining themselves as they did exclusively to their proselytising work never seriously took either to educating the people of this country or writing in their language.

There was a yet no Protestant Mission to Bengal. The only well known missionary before Carey who visited this country was Kiernander of whom we shall have occasion to speak later on but Kiernander himself ignorant of the language is in no way connected with our

Bento da Silvestre  
(1729-1803) Catechism  
and Book of Common  
Prayer in Bengali

present enquiry. Of Kiernander's associates however there was one Bento de Silvestre (*alias* de Souza) who seems to have written a Bengali Catechism

and a Book of Common Prayer in Bengali. Bento is said to have been born in Goa about 1728<sup>1</sup> of European parentage and his sojourn in Bengal extended from thirteen<sup>2</sup> to fifteen<sup>3</sup> years spent mostly at Calcutta and Bandel. He was for many years an Augustinian friar but he abjured the Pope before Kiernander on February 7 1760<sup>4</sup> whereupon he was appointed Catechist of the Mission at £20 a year and is reputed to have been a

Carey *Ordeal of Christ Biography* O 1 1830, vol II, p. 182

Hyde *Parochial Annals of Bengal* Cal. 1801 p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Carey *op. cit.* p. 182.

Carey *op. cit.* give different dates at p. 182 v. l. If the date given is July 1760 while in the same volume at p. 200, the date is 169. The story of his public abjuration of Roman Catholic faith is given in vol. II at p. 182.



zealous preacher in Portuguese and to have translated large portions of the Book of Common Prayer and the Catechism into Bengali, entitled probably *Prāśnottaramālā* and *Pratīhanāmālā*. His books are said to have been published by the Society for the promotion of Christian Knowledge and printed in London. Bento knew French, Portuguese, Bengali, and Hindusthani. He probably died in 1786 at the age of fifty eight. The date of publication of his books is unknown. Nagendra Nāth Basu gives 1765 as the date of publication of *Prāśnottaramālā*,<sup>2</sup> but this seems to be hardly correct, for Bento must have composed this work, after he was appointed Catechist, i.e. after 1766 (according to Hyde) or after 1768-69 (according to Carey).

So far as we can trace, these are the earliest names on the list of foreign benefactors to the Vernacular Literature of Bengal. But we do not find any serious and definitely important achievement in the field, until we come to the illustrious name of Nathaniel Piassé Halhed.<sup>3</sup>

Since 1772 the East India Company had actually taken upon itself the entire responsibilities of administration, and this made it almost a necessity for its civil servants to study the vernacular of the country which they had now begun to govern.<sup>4</sup> About this time, Halhed,

<sup>1</sup> For further details, see my paper in the *Pratibhā* (Dacca), Māgh, 1922 B.S. References to Bento will be found in Carne, *Lives of Eminent Missionaries* (London, 1833) in the article on Kiernander, also see John Zachariah Kiernander (Bap. Miss. Press, Cal. 1877).

<sup>2</sup> *Bisvacośa Art*. Bengali Language and Literature.

<sup>3</sup> The name is not Nathaniel Piassé Halhed, as given in Dinesh Chandra Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, Calcutta, 1911, pp. 15, 848, 849.

<sup>4</sup> See the elaborate arguments set forth in the Preface (p. 1-xxv) to Halhed's *Grammar*, in favour of the study of the Bengali language by Europeans. See also Introduction to Forster's *Vocabulary*.

an able scholar who had already achieved some literary reputation and had been a friend of Nathaniel Brassey Sheridan's<sup>1</sup> came out to Bengal as a civilian and applied himself with great assiduity to the study of the Bengali language. He is said to have attained so much proficiency in the language both in its colloquial and literary aspects that he had been known to disguise himself in native dress and pass as a Bengali in an assembly of Bengalis.<sup>2</sup>

Nathaniel Brassey Halhed was born on May 20 1751 at Westminster. His father William Halhed descended from an old Oxfordshire family was for eighteen years a Director of the Bank of England. Young Halhed was

We also learn that Nathaniel Brassey Halhed Esq either himself in collaboration with Richard Briley Sherid translated the Epistles of Aristonetus into English metre in 1771 (*General Magazine* lxxxii pt. 2, 181 p. 132).

Rev James Long *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Asiatic Society* 1835 p. 20; *Calcutta Review* 1850 p. 134. *Good Old Days of the Old Company* vol. i p. 23. But this story of Halhed's proficiency in Bengali seems to be doubtful. In the *Friend of India* (Aug. 1838) we read this, not of him, but of his nephew Nathaniel John Halhed (1817-1838) a Judge of the Dewá's Adalat. John Halhed was so informed and so well command over the language that he is said to have joined a party to Burdwan and passed there for a Bengali. See also R. G. Sanyal *Ramajanes and Anecdotes* vol. ii p. 9. John Halhed in Sanyal's work as well as in the *Bengal Obituary* (p. 404) is said to have been a son of the grammarian Halhed who is clearly a mistake for N. B. Halhed the grammarian who married (before 1841) Helena Robant, a daughter of the Dutch Governor of Ombay and died without a surviving issue. See Impey's *Memoir* by his son p. 300 footnote. Also *Dictionary of National Biography* Art. Halhed. That Halhed possessed a high degree of proficiency in the language and brought the scientific study of Bengali within easy reach is undoubted and justifies Colbrook's high eulogy (*Asiatic Researches* vol. vii 1790 p. 234) and to this is due the attribution of all sorts of apocryphal stories to his credit. For Nathaniel John Halhed, see Ramchander Doss *General Register of the E. I. Co.'s Civil Servants in the Bengal Establishment* Cal. 1844, p. 155.

educated at Harrow under Sumner, and there began his friendship with Richard Brinsley Sheridan, in conjunction with whom he subsequently produced a verse-translation of Aristænetus<sup>1</sup>. In 1768 he passed on to Christ Church, Oxford<sup>2</sup> where he made the acquaintance of William (afterwards Sir William) Jones, also a Harrow boy, who led him to study some of the Oriental languages. Having been jilted by Miss Linley in favour of Sheridan, he left England, having obtained a writership in the E. I. Company's Service. In India he attracted the notice of Warren Hastings at whose suggestion he translated what is known as the Gentoo Code between 1774-6 (First Edition 1776, Second Edition 1777). He returned to England in 1785 and the subsequent history of his life has little attraction for us. He was returned to Parliament in 1791 for Symington, Hampshire, which he represented till 1795. From this time he became associated with the teachings of the fanatic prophet Richard Brothers, attracted possibly by their resemblance to oriental mysticism with which he was familiar. In 1809 he obtained an appointment in the East India House. He died in London, February 18, 1830, and was buried at Petersham, Surrey<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1812, pt. 2, p. 132, also *Literary Anecdotes of the 18th Century*, p. 124-5.

<sup>2</sup> *Alumni Oxonienses*, Matric. July 13, 1768, aged 17.

<sup>3</sup> For further particulars, see *Asiatic Journal*, 1836, pp. 165-71, *The World*, June 18, 1790, Teignmouth, *Memoirs of Sir William Jones*, 1804, pp. 73, 431 and other references, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1830 (pt. 1, pp. 171-3), 1808 (pt. 11, p. 922), 1812 (p. 132), *Annual Register*, Moore, *Memoirs of Sheridan*, 1825, *Impey's Memoirs* by his son, pp. 355 et seq., Allibone, *Dictionary of British and American Authors*, 1895, vol. 1, *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, 1816, *Dictionary of National Biography* (in two last mentioned works a list of Halliwell's works is given), Nichols, *Literary Anecdotes*, vol. 11, p. 431.

In 1778<sup>1</sup> Halhed compiled and printed in English a  
*Grammar of the Bengal Language*<sup>2</sup>

*Grammar of the Beng  
 al Language* 1778

one of the earliest and for some time  
 the best introduction to the scientific  
 study of the language<sup>3</sup> At this

time we had no printing press possessing a set of Bengali  
 punches and the art of printing unknown we had hardly  
 any printed literature before this

*History of its printing  
 by Sir Charles Wilkins*

date. The history of the printing of  
 this work which was done in a press

at Hoogly in Bengal<sup>4</sup> marks an era in the  
 history of Bengali literature It is chiefly to the  
 exertions of the ever memorable Caxton of Bengal  
 Charles (afterwards Sir Charles) Wilkins a Bengali  
 Civilian and oriental scholar that we are indebted for  
 the beautiful types which he had himself prepared and in  
 which art he had instructed the Bengali mechanics thus in-  
 troducing as he did the art of printing into this country  
 It is impossible to exaggerate the services thus rendered  
 by this philanthropic Englishman not only to the cause  
 of vernacular literature but also to the general culture of

The date is not 181 as given in the *Bengal Obituary* p. 237  
 Smith *Life of Carey* repeats the mistake (New Ed. 1912, p. 150)

A *Grammar of the Bengal Language* by Nathaniel Brassey  
 Halhed Printed at Hoogly in Bengal, MDCCLXXVIII (1778)  
 This book is very scarce but copies may be found in the Calcutta  
 Imperial Library Bahadur Sahitya Parishat Library and Srirampur  
 College Library

The first Bengali grammar and dictionary so far as it can be  
 traced was, as we have seen in Portuguese A curious request  
 appears in the *Calcutta Gazette* April 23 1780, beseeching any  
 gentleman to undertake for public benefit the composition of a  
 Bengali Grammar (See n. Karr *Selects from C. L. Gazette* II 407)  
 It seems that by that time Halhed's *Grammar* had already become  
 scarce and the necessity for a fresh grammar was keenly felt.

the people, for it is undoubted that without this useful  
 ut of printing the general education of the people under  
 modern conditions is almost impossible

Charles Wilkins was born at Frome, Somerset, in 1750,  
 son of Walter Wilkins of that town  
 Sir Charles Wilkins 1750 1836 He came to Bengal in 1770 in the  
 service of the East India Company  
 as a writer and became superintendent  
 of the Company's Factories at Maldah "About 1778", he  
 writes, his "curiosity was excited by the example of his  
 friend Halhed" to commence the study of Sanscrit and  
 Persian, the vernaculars he had previously studied He  
 left India for health in 1786 and re-entered the service  
 of the Company in 1800 as Librarian and Custodian  
 of Oriental Manuscripts, taken at the Fall of  
 Seringapatam and elsewhere He was also attached to  
 the Haileybury College from its foundation in 1805  
 While in India he co-operated with Sir William Jones in  
 the foundation of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and was  
 a valuable contributor to the earlier volumes of the  
*Asiatic Researches* He was an F R S (1788), a  
 D C L of Oxford (1805), an Associate of the Institute  
 of France, and the Royal Society of Literature awarded  
 him its medal as "princeps litteraturae Sanscritae" He  
 was knighted in 1833 He died in London, May 13,  
 1836, and was interred at the Chapel in Portland town<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a list of his oriental works and other particulars, see  
*Asiatic Journal*, 1836, pp 165 71, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1836 (pt II,  
 pp 67 8), 1808 (pt II, p 922), *Annual Register* for 1836, *Alumni  
 Oxonienses*, 1888, *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, 1816,  
*Dictionary of National Biography*, *Centenary Volumes of the Asiatic  
 Society of Bengal*, *Letters in the Journal of American Oriental Society*,  
 1880, vol x, Preface to Sir William Jones's *Cakuntala*, and to Wilkins'  
*Sanscrit Grammar*, *Notice of the Life of H T Colebrooke*, by his son, p 7  
 Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgītā* (1785) with an introductory

To such a great scholar Bengal owes the establishment of the first vernacular printing press.<sup>1</sup>

The Preface to Hallid's *Grammar* sets forth some interesting details as to the difficulties which Wilkins had to overcome and as to how with

Extract from the  
Preface to Hallid's  
*Grammar* indicating  
the difficulties of print-  
ing

patient perseverance he ultimately succeeded. Public curiosity it says

must be strongly excited by the beautiful characters which are displayed in the following work and although my attempt may be deemed incomplete or unworthy I notice the book itself will always bear an intrinsic value from its containing, as extraordinary, an instance of mechanic abilities as has perhaps ever appeared. That the Bengal letter is very difficult to be imitated in steel will be readily allowed by any person who shall examine the intricacies of the stroke, the unequal length and size of the characters and the variety of their positions and combinations. It was no easy task to procure a writer accurate enough to prepare an alphabet of similar and proportionate body throughout and with that symmetrical exactness which is necessary to the regularity and neatness of a fount. Mr Volta (who is supposed to be well versed in this language) attempted to fabricate a set of types for it with the assistance of the ablest artist in London. But as he has egregiously failed in executing even the easiest part of the primary alphabet of which he has published a specimen there is no reason to suppose that

letter by Warren Hastings. See *C. I. Rev.* vol. III. 234; Seeo Karr *Selection from the Calcutta Gazette* 1790.

About the first introduction of printing in the East see D. Garnett's paper read before the Second International Library Conference (Transactions and Proceedings of the Second International Library Conference held in London, 1897. London 1898.)

his project, when completed, would have advanced beyond the normal state of imperfection to which new inventions are constantly exposed. The advice and even the solicitation of the Governor-General prevailed upon upon Mr Wilkins, a gentleman who has been some years in the India Company's Civil Service in Bengal, to undertake a set of Bengali types. He did and his success has exceeded every expectation. In a country so remote from European artists, he has been obliged to charge himself with all the various occupations of the Metallurgist, the Engraver, the Founder, and the Printer. To the merit of invention he was compelled to add the application of personal labour. With a rapidity unknown in Europe, he surmounted all obstacles which necessarily clog the first rudiments of a difficult art as well as the disadvantages of solitary experiment, and has thus singly on the first effort exhibited his work in a state of perfection which in every part of the world has appeared to require the united improvements of different projectors and the gradual polish of successive ages."<sup>1</sup>

It must be remembered that these labours of Wilkins did not end merely in the temporary and isolated benefit of printing a grammar but had far deeper and more wide-reaching effects for Wilkins had taken care that his work should produce lasting results. He had taught the art with great care to his Bengali assistant, one Panchānan, a blacksmith by caste,

The significance and importance of Wilkins' work to Bengali literature

<sup>1</sup> Preface pp xxiii iv. See also the letter of George Perry to Mr Nicols, the printer, dated Calcutta October 1 1783, quoted in the *Biographical Dictionary of Living Authors*, 1816, p 385. This press cannot be traced but Marshman (*History of Serampore Mission*, vol 1) says that it was set up by one Mr Andrews, a bookseller.

whom later on providence brought to Śrināmpur in search of work just at the time when Carey and his colleagues were in despair for a fount of Sanscrit and vernacular types Pauchūnan and his associates to whom he had communicated his art succeeded in course of time in consecrating it in Bengal.<sup>1</sup>

Halhed's *Grammar* possesses a peculiar interest for us as being one of the earliest efforts to study the language in a scientific way. Halhed himself is perfectly conscious of the difficulties of such a study and says in the Preface (p. xix) 'The path which I have attempted to clear was never before trodden. It was necessary that I should make my own choice of the course to be pursued and of the landmarks to be set up for the guidance of future travellers.'<sup>2</sup> But barring this antiquarian interest it can hardly be expected to possess any other value to us. It was obviously written for the benefit of the Europeans who wanted to study the foreign vernacular<sup>3</sup> and as such it was bound to be written entirely from their standpoint. Of course it is well to study the spirit with which foreigners

See *Memoir Relative to the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of the East at Serampore* by J. Marshman 1810; also Marshman *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. i.

The curious motto prefixed to the book says

ইতিহাসোপি যতঃস্ব ন যতঃ পদ্যবিরোধে

অর্থস্বাত্ত্ব কুংসন। অমো যতঃস্ব ন : কথং ॥

Carey acknowledges that he derived much help in writing his *Bengali Grammar* (1801) from Halhed's work; see Preface to Carey's *Grammar* (1st Ed. 1831); see also E. Carey *Life of Carey* p. 237.

On the title page we read

সে যতঃস্ব ন : যতঃস্ব ন : কথং

কথং হাংসেৎস্ব ন : ।



approach our language, but as a pioneer work and as one intended for mere beginners, uninitiated into the language, its value is greatly diminished. Even a cursory glance at the contents will show that the arrangement and division of the subject-matter is made chiefly on the plan of English grammars, beginning with the Elements (Chap I), proceeding with Substantives (Chap II), Pronouns (Chap III), Verbs (Chap IV), Words denoting Attributes and Relations (Chap V), Numerals (Chap VI) and ending with a brief discussion of Syntax (Chap VII), Orthography and Versification (Chap VIII).<sup>1</sup> The rules laid down are more or less general and elementary, but some attempt is made to arrive at broad underlying principles, although in a somewhat tentative and impressionist fashion. The arrangement is as comprehensive as possible but the author is scrupulously minute in his insertion of examples to every rule and is rather prolix in his observations upon the general grammar. One merit of the book consists, however, in the fact that Halhed was fully alive to the intimate relation of Bengali to Sanscrit, "of which language" he says "I have thought necessary to include within my design such of the grammatical principles as might throw a direct or even a collateral light on those of the Bengalese. I wished to obviate the recurrence of such erroneous opinions as may have been formed by the few Europeans who have hitherto studied the Bengalese, none

<sup>1</sup> But it is curious to note that ঞ is included in the list of consonants. The orthography seems to have been yet unsettled and the border line between colloquial and literary language seems to have been crossed very often, possibly owing to the difficulty of a foreigner, however studious, in entering into the genius of an alien tongue.

of them have traced its connections with Sanscrit and therefore I conclude their systems imperfect' (Preface p. xix et seq.) Of course adherence to Sanscrit is indispensable in writing a Bengali grammar but Halliday's work more or less presents Bengali as derived exclusively from its parent Sanscrit. He remarks at some length on the exceedingly corrupt state of the dialect of the time<sup>1</sup> and says that a grammar of the pure Bengali dialect cannot be expected to convey a thorough idea of the modern jargon of the kingdom. The many political revolutions it has sustained have greatly impaired the simplicity of the language and a long communication with the men of different religions, countries and manners has rendered foreign words in some degree familiar to a Bengali ear. The Mahomedans have for the most part introduced such terms as relate to the functions of their own religion or the exercise of their own laws and government. The Portuguese have supplied them with appellation of some European arts and inventions and in the environs of such foreign colony the idioms of the native Bengalese is tinged with that of the strangers who have settled there. Upon the same principle since the influence of the British nation has superseded that of its former conquerors many terms of British derivation have been naturalised into the Bengali vocabulary.

It cannot be doubted for a moment that the book holds a high place as one of the earliest of a series of

There will be found a curious appendix to this book containing a petition replet with foreign expressions, showing how far modern Bengali had been forced to abandon the purity of its dialect by the necessity of addressing itself to the Mohammedan rulers. In the Preface to his *Vocabulary* Forster similarly speaks of studiously avoiding Persian or Arabic pedanticisms.

attempts, valuable even to the present day, to study the vernacular scientifically, but if we leave aside this antiquarian and scientific interest, it can hardly be expected to come within literature proper. To the historian of literature, how ever, it is valuable, as most of these pioneer works are, for affording one of the earliest links in the revived study of the language itself.

We pass over other specimens of early printing which other specimens of the exigencies of administrative early printing changes and the establishment of the

Impey Code in Bengali by J. Duncan

Cornwallis Code in Bengali by H. P. Forster

Supreme Court (1774) brought into existence. Among these are to be found the Impey Code in Bengali,<sup>1</sup> which was translated by Jonathan

Duncan, afterwards Governor of Bombay, and printed at the "Company's Press" in 1785, and the famous Cornwallis Code of 1793<sup>2</sup> which was translated by H. P. Forster, "a merchant on the Bengal Establishment", of whom we shall have occasion to speak hereafter. It was likewise printed at the Government Press but from an improved fount.<sup>3</sup> We read of two other early publications in the Catalogue of Bengali Works in the British Museum.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Regulations for the Administration of Justice in the Court of the Dewanee Adaulat, passed in Council, the 5th July, 1785, with a Bengali Translation by Jonathan Duncan, Calcutta, 1785 pp 215, 31*

<sup>2</sup> The title page says *ক্রীষ্ণ নগর গবর্নর ডেনারল বাহাদুরের প্রজ্ঞাপন ১৭৯৩ সালের জুলাই ৫ তারিখে। তাহা নগর গবর্নর ডেনারল বাহাদুরের প্রজ্ঞাপন আওতে মুদ্রিত হইল। ১৭৯৩।* Second Edition in 1826

<sup>3</sup> "It is to this fount that Carey alludes, and it continued to be the standard of typography till it was superseded by the smaller and neater fount at Serampore" Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey, Marshman and Ward* 1859, vol. 1 p 71

<sup>4</sup> Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Books in the British Museum*, p 8

viz., (a) Bengal translation (by N B Edmonstone) of Regulations, etc., by Regulations for the administration of Justice in the Foudary Criminal Courts in Bengal, Behar and Orissa, passed by the Governor General in Council on the 3rd December 1790 Calcutta 1791 (b) Bengal Translation (by N B Edmonstone) of the Regulations for the guidance of the Magistrates passed by the Governor General in Council in the Revenue Department on the 18th May 1792 with supplementary enactments Calcutta, 1792

The next important work in our survey is Forster's *Forster's Vocabulary the first Bengali-English dictionary* 1700 1802 *Vocabulary* the first dictionary of the language and it will detain us for a moment as it was indeed a work of merit and for a long time considered to be the most authoritative and standard publication on the subject.<sup>1</sup>

Henry Pitts Forster born<sup>2</sup> in 1761 of whose early life little seems to be known, entered Bengal Service of the Company on August 7 1783 and rose to be the Collector of Tipperah in 1793 and Registrar of the Dewāni 'Ādālat of the 24 Parganas in 1794 In 1803-04, he was employed at the Calcutta Mint of which he rose to be the

Carey based his famous *Dictionary of the Bengal Language* (1815-1825) the source of all dictionaries of later times, on Forster's *Vocabulary* The first Bengali dictionary is, of course Manoel da Assumpção's *Vocabulario* in Portuguese which has been already mentioned.

The *Dictionary of National Biography* gives the hypothetical date of 1766 with a query But it appears from the obituary notices in the *Calcutta Government Gazette* of 1815 (Sep 14) and in the *Calcutta Monthly Journal* for September 1815 (p. 285) that Forster was aged 54 at the time of his death. In that case his birth-date would be 1761 which is here adopted.

<sup>2</sup> The date of publication given in Ramgopal Nyayaratna, *Bangabhāṣā O Sāhitya Bīṛayak Prastūb*, 3rd Ed., p. 192 is 1801 which is clearly erroneous. The date given in Dinesh Chandra Sen *History of Bengali Language and Literature*, 1911, p. 868 (where the book is described as "Bengali Dictionary by Forster, a Civilian and Sanskrit Scholar") is 1719 which seems to be an obvious mistake or misprint for 1799. The account given in this latter work is mainly based on Rev J Long's *Catalogue*, but Long's book was compiled not till 1855 and contains more than one inaccurate statement. See also the notification in the *Calcutta Gazette*, dated August 26, 1802, in which "Mr Forster has the pleasure to acquaint the subscribers of his Bengalee Vocabulary, that the second part is entirely printed off, and will be ready for delivery all in the present month of August and as he has more than doubled the size of the work beyond what he engaged, he hopes this will be admitted as a sufficient excuse for the delay in the publication" (Seton Karr, *Selections from Calcutta Gazette*, vol III, p. 561). It is clear that the work was published in two instalments in 1799 and 1802.

Forster, Senior Merchant on the Bengal Establishment.<sup>1</sup> It is evident from the lengthy preface to this work as well as to that of Halhed that these early works were undertaken not on literary but also on political grounds. Bengali at this time officially as well as popularly, was an unrecognised vernacular, and Forster rightly insists upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing the use of Persian in courts of law (see Preface to *Glossary*). It was thus due to the efforts of Halhed and Forster seconded among Europeans by Carey and the Śrīrāmpur missionaries and among Bengalis by Rām Mohan Rāy and his friends, that Bengali not only became the official language of the Presidency but it now ranks as one of the most prolific literary languages of India. One of the greatest difficulty however under which all compilers in this period had to labour and to which Forster himself as his preface shows, was fully alive, was the exceedingly corrupt state of the language in its current 'dialect' form. There was no standard literature, or if there had been one it was long forgotten or was not so widely known as to ensure fixity of forms and expressions.<sup>2</sup> This corruption

Printed at Calcutta from the Press of Ferris and Co 1799  
Dedicated to Thomas Graham Esq. dated December 15 1799. A copy of this work will be conveniently found in the Calcutta Imperial Library.

As the various quotations by way of illustration in Halhed's *Grammar* shows, he was not aware of the existence of more than half a dozen old Bengali works. He takes his passages mostly from *Mahābhārata* (from which he gives a lengthy quotation at pp. 37-42) *Rāmāyaṇa* and the various works of Bhārata-chandra, still in vogue, especially his *Bidyāsāndar*. Printing there was hardly any and books mostly in manuscripts were not easily procurable. It is also notable that Halhed confines himself exclusively to examples taken from Poetry and there is not a single prose quotation in his works. I might observe "he writes "that Bengali is at present in the same state with Greece before the time of Thucydides when Poetry was the

however, was confined principally to revenue and judicial terms, and the more common and daily shifting colloquial expressions. But the greatest difficulty was felt in orthography which was in a hopelessly chaotic state, in these ante-printing days. "There never having been" says Forster, "a native Bengalee grammarian nor indeed any author of note, who might be considered as a standard, the orthography has consequently never been fixed, and being current over an extensive country and among an illiterate people, almost every word has been and continues in one district or other to be variously spelt, and not infrequently so disguised as to render it difficult to recognise it, when met in its genuine form in Songskrit. In such cases, I have not scrupled to adopt Songskrit orthography, unless I found the majority of the people whom I consulted, concur in any particular vitiated mode of spelling it." In spite of these difficulties, however, Forster succeeded in compiling one of the most valuable and painstaking lexicon of the language ever published, and the eulogy of Marshman that Forster was the "most eminent Bengali scholar till the appearance of Dr Carey"<sup>1</sup> is fully justified.

The year in which Forster's *Vocabulary* was published saw another memorable but at that time an apparently unimportant event the landing of a band of missionaries on the banks of the Ganges and the starting of a mission at Śrināmpur. A year later, the Fort William College

The advent of the missionaries

only style to which authors applied themselves and studied prose was utterly unknown." The biographer of Dr Carey relates how (Smith, *op cit* p 202) when Carey visited Nadīyā, not many years ago the illustrious centre of Bengali literature, "he could not discover more than 40 separate works all in manuscripts, as the whole literature of 30,000,000 of people up to that time"

<sup>1</sup> Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey etc*, vol 1, p 71

was established at Calcutta for imparting knowledge of the vernaculars to young civilian. With the Mission as its centre and the Fort William College as its public forum, Bengali language entered upon a new phase of development, hitherto undreamt of. Forster was no doubt, followed by a band of earnest civilian workers of whom the names of J. F. Ellerton<sup>1</sup> and Sir Grove C. Haughton are the most well known. Yet with the missionaries in the field who, for years to come had made education of the people and cultivation of the vernacular their own peculiar province earlier work was eclipsed and a fresh impetus was given to the vernacular literature. The experimental stage was not yet over but what was desultory, sporadic and shipshod became regular, unbroken and systematic and for several years till the foundation of the Hindu College and the emergence of a new band of writers the history of Bengali literature is closely bound up with the labours

of the missionaries and school masters  
and especially of the brotherhood at  
Serampur, associated with the names of Carey, Marshman  
and Ward whose devotion earnestness and philanthropic  
purpose cannot be too highly spoken of

Ellerton wrote his works before 1800 and therefore strictly speaking belongs to this chapter. But Ellerton's Bible translations were not published until probably 1810 so an account of him will be found in the next chapter under the Bible translations of the Serampur missionaries.



## CHAPTER IV

- 8 -

### WILLIAM CAREY AND SRĪRĀMPUR MISSION.

Of the missionary movements which gave an early impetus to Bengali language and literature, the foremost place has been given to the fraternity of the famous Śrīrāmpur Mission, which was started by Carey, Maishman and Ward but of which the moving spirit was William Carey

William Carey, the son of a weaver and himself a village shoe-maker till the age of twenty-eight, was born on August 17, 1761 in the village of Paulesbury, situated in the very midland of England, in the heart of the district which not only produced Shakespeare and cherished Cowper but which also fostered Wychif and Hookei, Fox and Bunyan. But village-life in those days was far from being elysian and the destiny of the cottager, with poverty and sore toil staining him in the face, was cheerless enough. Buried in an obscure village, the eldest of a family of five children, young Carey seemed to be born to such a lot, the English labourer's lot of five shillings a week and the poorhouse in sickness and old age. At the age of sixteen he was an apprentice to the shoe-maker's trade—a trade of which however he was never ashamed<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It would be silly in me to pretend to recollect all the shoes I made. I was accounted a very good workman. (Letter to Ryland) There is no inconsistency between this and his famous retort to the general officer who inquired of one of the aides de camp, when dining with the Marquis of Hastings, whether Dr Carey had not once

and which linked him to the earliest missionaries of Alexandria, of Asia Minor and of Gaul some of whom were shoe-makers, and to a succession of scholars and divines, poets and critics, reformers and philanthropists who had used the shoe-maker's life to become illustrious. The picture of young Carey keeping school by day preaching on Sundays and cobbling or making shoes by night, would remind one very forcibly of Carlyle's picture of George Fox in his *Sartor Resartus*. But all this time in poverty that would have very soon crushed the spirit of an ordinary man he went on with his studies although books were rare in those days and not easy to be begged or borrowed by a country boy. It is remarkable that his taste inclined him to books of travel adventure history and natural science to the exclusion of novels plays and books on religious subjects. The religious earnestness which marked his later life had not yet dawned and he had been hitherto a stranger to the gospel of Christ. A remarkable change took place in his life about his eighteenth year. He joined the small church which was formed at Hackleton and afterwards the Baptist congregation at Moulton where he became a pastor. His mind was at this time occupied in acquiring the learned languages and almost every branch of useful knowledge.

His missionary ardour      It was about this time that his great thought about the practicability and importance of a mission abroad took definite shape in his mind. His extensive study of geography and books of travel convinced him painfully of the fact that a very small portion of the human race had yet possessed any knowledge of Christ and his

been a shoe-maker. "No, Sir only a cobbler" (quoted in Dr Calross's *William Carey*)

religion. In order to impress his brethren with his new idea, he wrote and published '*A Letter to the Obligations of the Christians for the Conversion of the Heathens in which the Religious State of Different Nations of the World, the Success of former Undertakings, are considered by William Carey*' (1792). This was the birth of England's foreign Mission in Bengal<sup>1</sup> for Carey would not remain idle until his project had been put into practice. At last, at a meeting of the Northamptonshire Association of Baptist Churches held at Kettering (Northampton) on the October 2, 1792, a Baptist Missionary Society was started on a humble scale for propagating the go-s-p-e-l. Carey set out for India on June 13, 1793. At first he had desired to go to Sets out for India, Tahiti or West America. At this time, however, he met John Thomas, a medical evangelist, who had made two voyages to India and had some experience of Bengal. It was Thomas who directed Carey to Bengal.

It must not be supposed, however, that the missionary spirit was unknown in Carey's time or that India was never before visited by the missionary activity. On the contrary, many great names and great though mistaken movements will occur to the memory of every reader of Church history<sup>2</sup>. Not to go far back to the missionary

Missions in India  
Carey's predecessors

<sup>1</sup> Carey, however, was not the first English missionary to Bengal this was one Mr Clarke (see Hyde, *Parochial Annals of Bengal*, p 213)

<sup>2</sup> See C. B. Lewis, *Life of John Thomas* (1873). Also Smith, *op cit* p 41

<sup>3</sup> For details about the history of Christian Missions of which literature is vast, the following books may be conveniently consulted, Brown's *History of Missions*, Kaye's *History of Christianity in India*, Marshall's *Christian Missions*, Hough's *Christianity in India*, Sherring's *Protestant Mission in India*, and Marshman's *History of the Serampore Mission*.

zeal of Francis Xavier or of the Moravian brotherhood in the East we find for the greater part of the 18th century (1707 to 1788) the Coast Mission (as it was called) carrying on its missionary work in South India with Tranquebar as its centre. At one time it was a very powerful movement carried on by the Lutherans whom from Zeingenbälg to Schwartz Dr Francke had trained at Halle and Frederick IV of Denmark had send forth to its India Company's settlement in the South but when Carey landed, the Coast Mission partly on account of the wars between the English and the French was almost in a state of inanition. To Bengal there was, we have seen, Roman Catholic Mission but as yet no Protestant Mission from England. The only well known missionary who came to Bengal before Carey, was Hier nandar the Swede<sup>1</sup> the "Mammon" of Hicky's *Gazette* whom Clive in 1758 had brought to Calcutta where

John Zachariah  
Klernander 1838 (d.  
1799)

James Long's *Handbook to Bengal Missions* will also be found useful, with reference to the general educational activity of the missionaries. Duff's *India and Indian Missions* and his articles in the earlier volumes of the *Calcutt Review* may also be consulted. On the Missions in the South, literature is vast. One may however consult with advantage *Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses écrites de Missions Etrangères* 20 vols. 1760-83 vols x xv specially refer to India; Lacroze *Histoire du Christianisme des Indes* 2 vols. 1758; Bertrand, *La Mission du Maduré* 4 vols. 1847; Coleridge *Life and Letters of St Francis Xavier*. For a fuller bibliography on this subject see A. O. Burnell, *A Tentative List of Books and MSS relating to the History of the Portuguese in India* Mangalore 1880.

See *Cal. Rev* 1817 vol viii pp. 124-184. Also Marshman *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. I, p. 20, et seq. Carey calls Klernander a German (E. Carey *Memoirs of Carey* p. 449). See Marshall's *Christian Missions*, vol. I, p. 278. For Klernander see *Bengal Obituary* p. 34 et seq. *Carmes Lives of Eminent Missionaries*; *Asiatic Journal*, vol. xv 1834; W. H. Carey *Oriental Christian Biography* pp 193 et seq; Hyde

he thenceforth lived, meeting young Carey subsequently at Bandel at the great age of eighty-four. But Kiernander could not wield any influence on the masses<sup>1</sup> and had no literary pretensions whatever, for although he started a native school and built a Church at his own cost, he was, in the first place, rather a missionary to the Portuguese and their descendants who were nominal Christians of the lowest Romanist type and, in the next place, Kiernander could never converse in Bengali or Hindustani and never cared to mix freely with the people of the country. Practically his work had made only the slightest impression and it was no wonder therefore that Carey could find no trace of his work among the people even six years after his death.

The condition of the clergy at this time, however, and their public and private morals did not in any way make

The character of the clergy and the opposition of the East India Company to Christian Missions

them attractive to or influential with the people of this country. It is well-known that the East India Company not only adopted a policy of perfect neutrality towards the religions of India and never attempted to preach their religion themselves but they also threw every possible obstacle in the way of the missionaries who wanted to settle in their territories. The ostensible ground for this aggressive spirit of discouragement was political but the real reasons are thus given by a writer in the *Calcutta*

*Parochial Annals of Bengal* *The Monumental Register* by M. DeRozario (1815) p. 109-113, Busteed, *Echoes from Old Calcutta*, 1908, Cotton, *Calcutta Past and Present*, John Zachariah Kiernander (a pamphlet), Cal. Bap. Miss. Press, 1877, etc.

<sup>1</sup> Of Kiernander's clerical convert, Bento de Silvestre *alias* de Souza and his contribution to Bengali, mention has already been made at p. 77-78.

*Review* (1859) 'The Missionary was the interloper *par excellence*, and the hate of a camel for a horse or a snake for a mongoose was feeble when compared with the hate of the Anglo-Indian for the Interloper. Partly from his training, partly from the first circumstances of the conquest the Anglo-Indian official regarded India as his property his peculium. An interloper was therefore in his eyes little better than a thief a man who undersold him, interrupted his profits and impaired his exclusive authority over the population. With the instinct which comes of self-defence he saw that the Missionary was the most dangerous of interlopers. Neither the character of the early founders of the British Empire as a body nor that of the clergy before the Srirampur mission was such as to inspire respect for their religion and of the clergy as a class the Governor General officially wrote to the Court of Directors as late as 1795. Our clergy in Bengal with some exceptions are not respectable characters.'

Although Carey and his fellow missionary were allowed to enter Calcutta (November 11 1793) without opposition indeed without notice (so obscure they were) yet under the existing conditions of things he had to preach his religion for several years almost like

Attempts at settle-  
ment a thief in constant fear of being  
deported to England. Quite destitute  
in Calcutta he had no definite plan for the future. The congregation at home were too poor to give him any assistance nor could they influence the authorities in England to allow him to settle down peacefully as a missionary for the latter would instantly refuse to listen to a handful of country no-bodies the chief among whom was a shoe-maker. After several fruitless attempts to settle down Carey at last succeeded in obtaining the situation of an assistant in charge of some

indigo factories at Madnābatī, 30 miles north of Maldah, the scene of John Elleiton's labours. All these years,

however, the idea of translating the Bible and preaching in the language of the people was ever present

in his mind. As soon as he could settle down, he applied himself to the study of Bengali, which, his biographer tells us, the indefatigable scholar had already begun during the voyage, and of which the first indication is given by an entry in his journal two months after he had landed. "This

day" he writes "finished the correction of the first chapter of Genesis, which

Munshi says is rendered into very good Bengali"<sup>1</sup> The Munsī or Bengali teacher referred to was one Ram Basu who not only taught the language to Carey but also had been of much help to the poor missionary during the years of uncertainty and struggle at the outset of his career. The greatest difficulty, however, which puzzled him, as a foreigner, in learning the language relates to the unsettled state of its forms and expressions, of its grammar and orthography and a vast difference seemed to him to exist between the literary language and its corrupt colloquial and dialectal forms. Thus he speaks with a naïveté characteristic of himself in a letter, dated October 2, 1795. "The language spoken by the natives of this part, though Bengali, is so different from the language itself (?) that I can preach an hour with tolerable freedom so as that all who speak the language or can read or write, understand me perfectly yet the poor labouring people can understand me little"<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *op. cit.* p. 61, Eustace Carey, *Memoirs of William Carey*, p. 119

<sup>2</sup> E. Carey, *op. cit.* p. 242, Smith, *op. cit.* p. 72

Indeed, a foreigner always finds it hard work to obtain in a year the endless variety of its idiom and the niceties of pronunciation but Carey certainly was very far from right when he says further that although the language is rich beautiful, and expressive it has got scarcely a large vocabulary in use about religion and kindred subjects.<sup>1</sup> The whole trend of ancient or pre-British Bengali literature which is religious in subject will prove the inappropriateness of this hasty statement. The half-pitying and half-contemptuous tone in which Carey and his missionary colleagues speak of our forefathers as so many heathens or semi-barbarians<sup>2</sup> no doubt raises our smile today, but they in all sincerity, born of religious enthusiasm really thought in this way. It is true indeed that there was a partial decadence of religious life and ideals in the country during the last years of the Mohammedan rule yet Carey and his colleagues in spite of their catholicity and tolerance could never detect the signs of religious life which could produce the noblest songs of Rām prasād. From the earliest times to the days of Rām mohan Rāy and even to the present day, religion had as we have already stated a great influence on Bengali literature. The great personality of Chaitanya and his disciples, the songs of the Bhagabat poets, breathing as they do the purest language of poetry and devotion—all indicate what charm religion had always possessed for the people and their literature. The fact was making every possible allowance to missionary fanaticism that Carey as he himself admits<sup>3</sup> could lay his hand upon very few ancient Bengali books and manuscripts.

See his letter to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, quoted in E. Carey *op. cit.* p. 230.

He speaks of this country as one devoted to the service of Satan and immersed in the awful ignorance of heathenness. E. Carey *op. cit.* p. 204.

Smith *op. cit.* p. 202.



and that with the decay of learning and culture in Bengal, the vernacular literature had come to be neglected, and for some time it had practically become non-existent. It was only natural, therefore, for these European scholars from Halhed to Yates, who were not aware of the existence of more than half a dozen Bengali works, to indulge in such sweeping and hasty statements.

In his study of Bengali, Carey found out very early that without the classical Sanskrit, which he always regarded as "the parent of nearly all the colloquial dialects of India"<sup>1</sup>, he could neither master its Bengali offshoot nor enrich that vernacular with effective literary forms and combinations. If one must borrow, one might go to the literatures of Europe for themes and methods but the expression must always be indigenous. It is significant indeed that all the early Bengali writers from Carey to Bidyāsāgar, whose writings have helped to

create for us the Bengali prose, were

His study of  
Sanskrit and its effect

learned in the Sanskrit language,  
and were therefore always ready to

avail themselves of the rich treasures of forms and expressions which that classical language afforded. Carey applied himself to Sanskrit with so much industry that as early as April 1796 we find him writing home that he had made enough progress in the language to read the *Mahābhārata*, and that in 1798 he had compiled a Sanskrit grammar and the considerable portion of a Sanskrit-English dictionary<sup>2</sup>. It must be remembered that Sanskrit learning and literature were much patronised in those days and the first step taken by the government towards the education of the native-born subjects was inspired by the desire for the promotion of Sanskrit scholarship.

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Sanskrit Grammar* (1806)

<sup>2</sup> See also his letter to Sutcliffe, June 16, 1798, quoted in E. Carey's *op cit* p 323

After six years in North Bengal as a missionary scholar and indigo-planter Carey found that a few insignificant villages of two or three dozen mud walled cottages hardly afforded sufficient scope for his missionary work. He was forming the project of a Mission Settle-

ment on the Moravian model but in

Work at Madnābati  
given up

1799 the indigo works at Madnābati had to be given up. Carey had been

thinking of taking another small indigo factory in the neighbourhood when he learned that he was soon to be joined in his missionary work by four colleagues from

England. The expected re-inforce-

Reinf. from  
England.

ment consisted of Joshua Marshman and his wife William Ward Daniel

Brunsdon,<sup>1</sup> and William Grant. The original intention was to proceed to Maldah and settle with Carey at Madnābati. They arrived off Calcutta on October 12 1799 in an American ship but instead of landing they proceeded to Srirāmpur where they could be safe under the protection

of the Danish flag. Their object in

Srirāmpur why  
chosen as a mission  
centre.

choosing Srirāmpur as a mission centre is thus given by Carey.<sup>2</sup> At

Serampore we can settle as missionaries, which is not allowed here and the great ends of the mission particularly the printing of the Scriptures seem much more likely to be answered in that situation. In that part of the country inhabitants are far more numerous than in this and other missionaries may be there permitted to join us which here it seems they will not'. In the beginning of the last century Srirāmpur was a kind of *Alsatia*—'a city of refuge' and the persecuted missionaries

For a sketch of Brunsdon's life see W. H. Carey *Oriental Christian Biography* vol. I, pp. 170-72.

Smith, *op. cit.* p. 88

could surely do no better than seek its protection for the purposes of their mission. In selecting this city instead of any other, they did what was best under the circumstances. "Had we stayed at Mudnabuttu or its vicinity" Carey wrote "it is a great wonder we could have set up our press, Government would have suspected us, though without reason to do so and would, in all probability, have prevented us from printing, the difficulty of procuring proper materials would also have been almost insuperable"<sup>1</sup> Śrīrāmpur is situated in one of the richest and most densely peopled tracts in Bengal, very close to the metropolis, and it was here that the earliest European factories in Bengal were established, the Danes planting themselves at Śrīrāmpur, the French at Chandan-nagar, the Dutch at Chinsurah, the English at Hughli, and the Portuguese at Bandel.

Two of the missionaries speedily fell victims to the climate. Marshman and Ward, whose names are indissolubly linked with that of Carey, who had taken up his residence with them on January 16, 1800, resolved to start systematic mission-work, forming a brotherhood somewhat on the idea of the Pentecostal Church. The mission in its disinterestedness, its lofty aims, and its kindly commonsense deserves sympathetic study. The spirit which animated them is to be clearly seen in the Form of Agreement, drawn up by them, which exhibits the high aims, the simple and disinterested life of work to which the Śrīrāmpur brethren bound themselves from the beginning. This earnest

Carey leaves North Bengal and joins Marshman and Ward at Śrīrāmpur (1800)

The Śrīrāmpur Mission started

<sup>1</sup> E. Carey, *op cit* p. 379-80

philanthropy and self sacrifice never failed to make an impression upon the hearts of the people and this is one

of the reasons why the Srirampur mission had been able to wield an enormous influence in the country

The secret of its success and influence. One of the principles which regulated the whole course of the Mission was that a missionary must consider himself as one of the companions and equals of the people to whom he had been sent and that he must endeavour to gain a thorough knowledge of those among whom he laboured in their modes of thinking and feeling this was what brought them nearer to the people and gained their confidence They had started a school at Srirampur as early as May 1 1800 In their letter to the Society at home we find the missionaries writing in October 10 1800 'There appears to be a growing familiarity between us and the natives They receive our printed papers with the greatest eagerness and we cannot doubt but that they are pretty extensively read' Without this sympathy self-denial and high motives of philanthropy and love they would not have been able to attract the people and mould their life and thought in the way they had done

Of the two fellow workers of Carey Joshua Marshman, son of a weaver and for sometime a bookseller's employee in London, was born at Westbury in Wiltshire April 20 1768 After much struggle and privation he succeeded in obtaining the mastership of a school in

E. Carey op. cit. p. 100.

For more details see Marshman *History of Serampore Mission*, 2 vols (1849); *Bengal Obituary* pp 340-43; *Dict. of Hindu Biography*; W. H. Carey *Oriental Christian Biography* vol. III pp 257-63

Bristol, and while living there he was baptised and volunteered to go out to India as an assistant to Carey. He was a man not only of great mental capacity, endowed with what the Scotch call "a long head", but also had fine administrative ability which kept the missionary community in perfect order. William Ward, (1769-1823) Ward, though inferior in intellectual equipment, was a man of great practical ability and sound common-sense. He was born at Derby on October 20, 1769<sup>1</sup>. The son of a builder, he had received some education and had been apprenticed to a printer. He rose to the position of the editor of the *Derby Mercury* and afterwards of a newspaper in Hull. It was at Hull five years before he came out to India, Carey had met Ward and said to him "If the Lord bless us, we shall want a person of your business to enable us to print the Scriptures. I hope you will come after us." He joined the Church in 1796 and came out to India in 1799 at the invitation of Dr. Carey. His work like that of Marshman, from 1800, was connected, if not identified, with that of the Mission at Shāmpū. Ward, however, had very little connexion with Bengali literature<sup>2</sup> except indirectly, much less than Carey and Marshman, to whom, as to no other missionary or foreign writer, the country owes a deep debt of obligation for furthering the cause of education and indirectly of modern Bengali prose.

<sup>1</sup> For more details, see *Hist of Serampore Mission*. Also Samuel Stennett, *Memoirs of the Life of William Ward* (1825), *Bengal Obituary*, pp 343-45, *Dict of National Biogr*. *Memoir of Ward*, Philadelphia, Simpson's *Life* prefixed to Ward on Hindus, W. H. Carey, *Orient Christ Biograph* vol II, pp 16 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> Ward, says Carey, could speak Bengali a little (E. Carey, *op cit* p 424). Ward, however, wrote some tracts in Bengali which will be noticed hereafter.

One of the earliest works that the Mission accomplished was the printing of the New Testament in Bengali on Feb 7 1801 after a labour of nine months' and of the Old Testament between 1802 and 1809 Carey while at Madnābatī had completed the translation of the greater portion of the Bible by the year 1798 with the exception of the historical books from Joshua to Job.<sup>1</sup> He had gone to Calcutta to obtain the estimates of printing but had found it beyond his slender means for the cost of printing 10 000 copies was estimated at nearly Rs. 43 7 10.<sup>2</sup> To have got it printed in England was well nigh impracticable for he had found that each

Proface to the *Serampore Letters* (1800-1816) ed. by L. and M. Williams with an introductory memoir by Thos. Wright; also see Marshman *History of Serampore Mission*. But see *Bengal Observatory* pp. 333

He had begun the translation as soon as he could fairly learn the language. We find him writing to Sutcliffe only a year after his arrival (Aug 9, 1794). "The language (of Bengali) is copious and I think beautiful. I begin to converse in it a little. I intend to send you a copy of Genesis, Matthew Mark and James in Bengali; with a small vocabulary and grammar of the language in manuscripts, of my own composition" (E. Carey *op cit* p. 193). On July 17 1796 he writes to Fuller that almost all the Pentateuch and the New Testament are now completed (*ibid* p. 200). By 1799 almost the whole of the Bible was translated. It is customary to attribute the authorship of the entire Bengali Bible to Carey but from the report of the work given by him (*ibid* p. 345, Letter to Fuller dated July 17 1799) we find that in the first version, Fountain (d. Aug 1800) and Thomas helped him much. Fountain translated 1 and 2 Kings, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel and 2 Chronicles; while Thomas undertook Matthew Mark (11 x) Luke and James. All the rest was Carey's own as well as the whole correction. The correction, he sometimes rendered the original version into quite a new work especially in the case of Thomas's translation which was very incorrect and imperfect (*ibid* p. 223; *Periodical Accounts* vol. I pp. 20-21).

<sup>1</sup> E. Carey *op cit* p. 277 and also p. 303; see also p. 239

punch would cost a guinea a piece After several fruitless attempts, when the project had appeared almost incapable of accomplishment, Carey saw a wooden printing press advertised in Calcutta for £10 He at once purchased it at Rs 400 and set it up at Madnābatī It was from this old press, subsequently removed to Sīnāmpur that the first edition of the Bengali New Testament was printed<sup>1</sup> The types were set with the knowledge of a first-rate printer by Waid with his own hand, assisted by Carey's son, Felix<sup>2</sup> The second edition was

<sup>1</sup> Smith, *op cit* p 181, E Carey *op cit* p 330

<sup>2</sup> If we leave aside Ellerton's New Testament and Thomas's version of Genesis and other books of the Bible (1791), this is the first effort at an entire translation of the Bible into Bengali Ellerton's version, however, was not published till 1820, and Thomas himself got much help from Carey in his translation

Of John F Ellerton (1768 1820), nothing much is known except that he was an indigo planter and was the first to establish a Bengali school in Maldah He wrote (1) মঙ্গল সনাতন বাতিউ বচিত । Calcutta 1819

John F Ellerton  
(1768 1820)

(2) মঙ্গল সনাতন যোহন বচিত । Calcutta 1819 in Bengali and English (3) জগতাবক প্রভু যিশু খ্রীষ্টের মঙ্গল সনাতন । or the New Testament, translated by J F Ellerton, Calcutta 1820, pp 993 This last mentioned work, though discontinued for

a time on learning that Carey was engaged on a similar work was at last printed by the Calcutta Bible Society See the *Fifteenth Report of the British and Foreign Bible Soc* London 1819, pp 214 and 319, 1818, App p 24 (4) গুরু শিষ্যের প্রশ্নোত্তর ধার্মাতে সৃষ্ট্যানির বিবরণ or *Account of the Creation of the World and of the First Age*, in the form of a dialogue between a master and his pupil, Calcutta 1820 In *Cal Rev* vol viii, 1850, this work is probably referred to as গুরুশিষ্য । See Long, *Introduction to Adam's Reports* Smith, *op cit* p 145 *Cal Rev* 1850 The *Bengal Obituary* (1851) p 144 Blumhardt, *Catalogue* For Thomas, see *Life of John Thomas* by C B Lewis (1873) The books of the Old Testament, as printed by the Serampore Press (1801 9) are in 4 vols viz, 1 Pentateuch, 1801, 2 Joshua Esther, 1809, 3 Job-Song of Solomon, 1804, 4 Isaiah Malachi, 1805 According to the Serampore Memoirs, however, the correct dates of publication are

published in 1803<sup>1</sup> but it was prepared from a fount of more elegant and smaller size constructed by Manohar. The story of its printing is thus told in the *Memoir relative to Translations*,

The Press at  
Srirampur

‘Happily for us and India at large Wilkins had led the way in this department and persevering industry under the greatest disadvantages with respect to materials and workmen had brought the Bengali (*sic*) to a high degree of perfection. Soon after our settling at Serampore the providence of God brought to us the very artist who had wrought with Wilkins in that work and in a great measure imbibed his ideas. By his assistance we erected a letter foundry although he is now dead he had so fully communicated his art to a number of others that they carry forward the work of type-casting and even of cutting the matrices with a degree of accuracy which would not disgrace European artists.’<sup>2</sup> The

Paheshnan and  
Manohar

1. 1802; 2. 1800; 3. 1803; 4. 1807. The Psalter appears to have been issued separately in 1803. A revised edition appeared in 1832. The New Testament was published in 1801 [See Appendix II at the end of this volume for a note on Biblical translations]. In *Cal Rer* x, p. 120 the date of Ellerton's New Testament is erroneously given as 1810. For John Thomas's translation of the Scriptures, see Murdoch, *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of Ind* pp. 4 and 5. Smith *op. cit* p. 179. Thomas's version (before 1791) was circulated in manuscript. Kaye *Christianity in India* p. 138, speaks of this version as having been done in “scarcely intelligible Bengalee.” See Carey *Orient Christ Biography* vol. I, pp. 444-451.

3rd Ed. 1811; 4th Ed. 1810; 8th Ed. 1832. The date in the text is the date of the 2nd Ed. as given by Marshman; but Smith (p. 188) gives 1806 as the date. The fact is that the edition was commenced in 1803 and completed in 1806. See Appendix II at the end of this volume.

*Memoir relative to the Translation of the Sacred Scriptures into the Languages of the East* Serampore 1810, by Marshman. The Bible



artist referred to above as Wilkins' assistant was Panchānan,<sup>1</sup> of whom we have already spoken. Panchānan's apprentice Manohar continued to make elegant founts of type in all the Eastern languages for sale as well as for the Mission, where he was "employed for 40 years and to his exertion and instruction Bengal is indebted for the various beautiful types of Bengali, Nagri, Persian, Arabic, and other characters which have been gradually introduced into the different printing establishments"<sup>2</sup>

Much misconception seems to exist as to the exact nature of the services done by Carey to Bengali literature by translating the Bible into that language. No doubt, here was the realisation of one of the highest ambitions of Carey as a missionary and in the history of Church Missions, it occupies a very high and well-deserved position. Carey has been called by enthusiastic admirers the Wyclif and the Tyndal, while Dr Yates the Coverdale of the Bengali Bible.<sup>3</sup> Whatever may be the value of such comparisons, from the standpoint of Bengali literature it is, however, to say the least, ill-informed and misleading. The position which Wyclif's, Tyndal's and Coverdale's versions respectively occupy in the history as well as the literature of England

was translated through the efforts of the Sūrāmpur Mission into 40 different languages and dialects. See also *Periodical Accounts relative to the Baptist Mes Soc* vol. i, pp 292, 368, 417, 527 vol. ii pp 62, 132. See remarks on these oriental translations in William Brown, *History of Missions*, vol. ii p 71.

<sup>1</sup> Panchānan lived for only 3 or 4 years after this. *Bengal Obituary* p 338.

<sup>2</sup> *Marhaman, Hist of Serampur Mission* vol. i p 179.

<sup>3</sup> Smith op cit p 146. But see Brown *Hist of Missions*, vol. ii, p 71 where Carey's version is impartially estimated to be now "given up as of no great value." See *Cal Rev* x p 131, *Cal Christ Observ* vol xii p 557.

is not the same as that which Carey & or Yates' translations can ever aspire to attain'. There might be some point in comparing Carey's version to Wyclif's, for the latter cannot it is well known compete as literature with that produced two centuries later in English and consequently possesses nothing save an historical attraction. But Coverdale's claim rests on his supposed principal share in the merits of the early Tudor translations of the Bible. To compare these early English versions of the Bible with the Bengali ones of Carey and Yates would be to make a wrong estimate of both. As a piece of literature the Bengali version cannot be said to be a masterpiece in the sense in which the English versions are. That the English version whether of 1535 or of 1611 is a monument of early English prose that its peculiar style—the 'swan song' as happily put of Middle English transferred from verse to prose—has always been the admiration of best critics and writers from generation to generation and that there is no better English anywhere than the English of the Bible of these facts there can be no doubt. But to speak of Carey's and Yates' versions in similar terms would not only be incorrect but ludicrous. Here is the version of one of the most sublime passages of the Bible—the account of the creation at the beginning but the reader will note that the translation is not only imperfect and crude, the grammar incorrect the idiom faulty the syntax crabbed and obscure but also the whole thing looks like an absolutely foreign growth vainly attempted to be acclimated in Bengali.

প্রথমে ঈশ্বর হৃদয় করিলেন বর্গ ও পৃথিবী। পৃথিবী শূন্য ও  
অস্থিরাকার হইল এবং গভীরের উপরে অন্ধকার ও ঈশ্বরের আশ্রা

<sup>1</sup> Or even Wengur's (1661) or Rouse's (1807) later revisions.

দোলায়মান হইলেন ডগের উপর। পবে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন দীপ্তি হউক তাহাতে দীপ্তি হইল তখন ঈশ্বর সে দীপ্তি বিলম্ব দেখিলেন। তৎপবে ঈশ্বর দীপ্তি অন্ধার বিভিন্ন বলিলেন। ঈশ্বর ও দীপ্তির নাম বাধিলেন দিবস ও অন্ধবাবের নাম বাধি। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতঃকাল হইলে হইল প্রথম দিন।

এবং ঈশ্বর বলিলেন আবাস হউক ডগের দ্ব্যস্তা ও সে ডগ এ জন প্রথম কবক। অতএব ঈশ্বর স্বর্গে বলিলেন আবাস ও প্রথম কবিলেন আবাসের উপবে ডগ নিচের ডগ হইতে। তাহাতে সে মত হইল। ঈশ্বর সে আকাশের নাম বাধিলেন স্বর্গ নক্ষা ও প্রাতঃকাল হইলে হইল দ্বিতীয় দিবস।

এবং ঈশ্বর বলিলেন স্বর্গের নিচের ডগ একওব হউক এক স্থানে ও স্কন্ধ ভূমি প্রকাশ হউক। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। পবে ঈশ্বর সে স্কন্ধ ভূমির নাম বাধিলেন পৃথিবী ও সে ডগের একওবেব নাম বাধিলেন মন্দ্র। ঈশ্বর ও তাহা দেখিলেন বিলম্ব। পবে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন পৃথিবী উৎপন্ন কবক অদ্বন্দ্ব ও বীজ দায়িক ত্বণ ও কল বৃক্ষ বাহা বল কবিলে। আপনাবান্ধবাযি বাহাব বীজ আপনাব মধ্যে পৃথিবীর উপব। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। অতএব পৃথিবী উৎপন্ন কবিল অদ্বন্দ্ব ও বীজ দায়িক ত্বণ আপনাবান্ধবাযি ও বলদায়িক বৃক্ষ বাহাব বীজ আপনাব মধ্যে আপনাব প্রকাবান্ধবাযি। ঈশ্বর ও দেখিলেন তাহা বিলম্ব। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতঃকাল হইলে হইল তৃতীয় দিবস।

তখন ঈশ্বর বলিলেন দীপ্তি হউক স্বর্গের আকাশের মধ্যে দিবাবাধি বিভিন্ন কবিতে ও তাহা হউক চিহ্ন ও কাল ও দিবস ও বসব নিকপণের কাবণ। তাহাবা ও দীপ্তি হউক স্বর্গের আকাশে উজ্জল কবিতে পৃথিবীর উপব। তাহাতে সেই মত হইল। তাবপবে ঈশ্বর নিৰ্ম্মাণ কবিলেন দুই বড দীপ্তি বডতব দীপ্তি দিবসের কতৃৎ কবিতে স্কন্ধতব দীপ্তি বজ্রনিব কৃতিত্ব করিতে তিনি ও নিৰ্ম্মাণ কবিলেন তাবাগণ। ঈশ্বর ও স্থাপন কবিলেন তাহাবদিগকে স্বর্গের আকাশে উজ্জল কবিতে

পৃথিবীতে ও কতৃষ্ণ করিতে দিবারাদির উপর ও দীপ্তি অঙ্ককার বিভিন্ন করিতে। ঈশ্বর ও দেবিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতঃকাল হইলে হইল চতুর্ষ দিবস।

তাহার পরে ঈশ্বর বলিলেন জল উত্তর করুক অগদ জল ও পক্ষ উড়ুক পৃথিবীর উপর যুগেব আকাশে। সেই মত ঈশ্বর নির্মাণ করিলেন বড় কুপীর ও লুপাদি প্রতি জল বাহা জলে গতি করে তাহারদের আত্মাথুবারি ও প্রতিপক্ষ তাহারদের আত্মাথুবারি। ঈশ্বর ও দেবিলেন তাহা বিলক্ষণ। ঈশ্বর ও আনীর্গাদ দিলেন তাহারদিসকে করিয়া বড় ও বংশ বৃদ্ধ ও পুষ্ক হও গুপ্তের জলে পক্ষ ও বংশ বৃদ্ধ হউক পৃথিবীর উপর। সন্ধ্যা ও প্রাতঃকাল হইলে হইল পক্ষম দিবস।

( বর্গ ১৩ক। পৃ ১—৩ )

The Bengali style however in these versions, it will be seen is not laboured but directed towards simplicity and some attempt is made in however groping fashion to reproduce the poetry and magnificence of the Biblical style so far as it was possible to do so in that early stage of Bengali prose.<sup>2</sup> Yet, as the

বর্গ ১৩ক। তাহা ঈশ্বরের সমস্ত শাক্য। বাহা প্রকাশ করিয়াছেন গুপ্তের জ্ঞান ও কার্যশোভনার্থে। তাহার প্রথম ভাগ বাহাতে চারি বর্গ মৌল্য ব্যবস্থা বিশ্রামের বিবরণ, দ্বিতীয় ভাগে (৩) শাক্য। মৌল্য ব্যবস্থা। তর্জমা হইল ত্রেত্রিতা হইতে। ঈশ্বর পূরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮ ১। The English title-page is as follows: The Holy Bible containing the Old Testament and the New translated out of the original tongues. Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press. 1802. The title page of vol II (New Testament) is as follows: বর্গ ১৩ক তাহার অন্তর্ভাগ। তাহা আশ্রয়ের প্রকৃত এতকর্তা যেও দ্বিতীয় বহুল সমাধার। তর্জমা হইল গ্রীক ভাষা হইতে। ঈশ্বর পূরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮ ১।

No pains were spared, it seems, to make the version as accurate and natural as possible. Carey revised it four times before publication with Rām Basu, the most accomplished Bengali scholar of the time, by his side. The Pundits judged of the style and syntax and he himself of the faithfulness of the translation (H. Carey op. cit. p. 306). In 1815 Carey took Yates as an associate with him self in these translation. His special care" says W H Carey (*Oriental Christ, Biography* vol. I, p 319) "was bestowed upon the Bengali version.

following extract from Pharaoh's dream in the revised version of Yates will indicate, how immature and crude the style is and what presumption it is to compare this with the traditional excellence of the Biblical style<sup>1</sup>

একদিনে পূর্বকালীয় নিসবদেশেব কিবোণ্ বাজ এই স্বপ্ন দেখিল। সে নদীকূলে দাঁড়াইয়া থাকিলে নদী হইতে সাতটা হৃষ্টপুষ্ট স্তন্যব গোক উঠিয়া প্রাপ্তবে চবিত্তে লাগিল। পবে আব সাতটা কৃশ ও কুৎসিং গোক নদী হইতে উঠিয়া নদীর তীবে ঐ গোকদেব নিবট দাঁড়াইল। পবে সেই কৃশ কুৎসিং গোক ঐ সপ্ত হৃষ্টপুষ্ট স্তন্যব গোককে গ্রাস কবিল। তখন কিবোণেব নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইল। তাহাব পবে দিবোণ নিদ্রিত হইলে দ্বিতীয় বাব স্বপ্ন দেখিল। এক বোঁটাতে সাত স্থূলাকাব উত্তণ শীষ উঠিল। পবে পূর্বীয় বায়ুতে শুক আব সাত ক্ষীণ শীষ উঠিল। এবং সেই সাত ক্ষীণ শীষ ঐ সাত স্থূলাকাব পূর্ণ শীষ গ্রাস কবিল। পবে কিবোণেব নিদ্রাভঙ্গ হইলে তাহা স্বপ্নমাত্র হইল।

It has been further remarked with regard to these Bengali versions that while the ideas of the Bible elaborate the notions of the readers, the language of it accustoms them to the disuse of the vulgar *patois*. All the resources of the language, grammatical and

<sup>1</sup> Of course, this is a great improvement upon the original version of 1802 which runs as follows —

দুই বৎসব পূর্ণ হইলে এইমত হইলে ফারোঙা স্বপ্ন দেখিল দেখ সে ডাঙাইয়াছে নদীর কিনারায় দেখ নদী হইতে উঠিল স্তন্যব হৃষ্টপুষ্ট সাতটা গাভী ও চবিত্তে লাগিল ধারের উপর দেখ তাহার পবে আর সাতটা গাভী উঠিল নদী হইতে বড় কুচ্ছিত ও কৃষা পরে নদীতীরে ডাঙাইল আব সকল গাভীর কাছে অতঃপব কুচ্ছিত কৃষা গাভীরা খাইয়া ফেলাইল নে সাতটা স্তন্যব হৃষ্টপুষ্ট গাভীবদিগকে। তখন ফারোঙার চৈতন্য হইল। পরে সে পুনর্বার নিদ্রিত হইয়া স্বপ্ন দেখিল দেখ সাত শিষ শস্য উৎপন্ন হইল একগাছ তৃণের উপর তাজা ও বিনক্ষণ তারপর দেখ পুবিয়া বায়তে শুক করা সাতটা পাতলা শিষ উৎপন্ন হইল পরে সে সাতটা শিষ খাইয়া ফেলিল সে সাতটা তাজা শিষেরদিগকে তখন ফারোঙা জাগ্রত হইল। (ধর্মপুস্তক, প্রথমভাগ, পৃঃ ৪১)

lexicographical are called out to indicate (1) new and foreign and (2) noble ideas'. Hence it is argued, the importance of the translated Bible in Bengali literature. The remark however would have been perfectly true and appropriate had the condition of things been in India what it had always been in Europe. The Bible is the one book in the European countries which is a universal favourite and its ideas and language have through many centuries become almost a part of the ideas and language of the people at large. To this is partly due the enormous influence of the sacred book on the languages and literatures of Europe. The Bengali Bible however has failed to exercise any such influence. In India where the missionaries can boast of very few triumphs among the educated class and the Bible is not so familiarly known and universally respected the case is not the same as it is in Europe. Again it is true that in all translations the resources of the language are drawn out to the utmost and that translation is the best exercising ground for an infant literature yet even as a piece of translation the Bengali Bible cannot in any sense be regarded as a triumph of the translator's art and the very strain in expressing strange and alien ideas with a limited command over the inherent powers of the language makes the style crabbed stilted and unnatural. The missionary writings in Bengali have a sort of traditional repute for crabbed syntax and false juxtaposition of words here surely the tradition for once is not misleading. Indeed in spite of all that can be said in favour of the versions no critic, however alive to their importance

as the earliest specimen of simple and homely prose, can ever claim any thing like literary competency for them marked that they are throughout by earliness and immaturity Carey's claim to importance as a contributor to Bengali literature does not rest so much upon his Bible-translations and numerous tracts on Christianity, but on the works which he produced in another sphere of usefulness but on which he himself seems to have laid less emphasis although they show him in a better light as a writer of Bengali

This sphere of usefulness was first opened to Carey by his appointment as a teacher of Bengali in Lord Wellesley's newly established Fort William College

It is to be noted, however, that it was the publication of the Bible-translation and his reputation as the foremost European scholar of Bengali that had secured the appointment which placed him in a position, philosophical and financial, to further the cause of Bengali writing. It was more to his connexion with the Fort William College and his growing influence as a writer and scholar in Bengali than to his position as a preacher of the Gospels that we owe every thing that he did for enriching Bengali literature

## CHAPTER V

### WILLIAM CAREY AND FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE.

Among the institutions which in various ways gave an impetus to Bengali literature we must give a prominent place to the Fort William College. Since the practical disappearance of Bengali literature after Bhūrat-chandra's death its first public emergence is to be traced in the prose publications of this College which although no literature by themselves certainly heralded the more mature productions of later days. The importance of the Fort William College in the history of modern Bengali prose is not due to the supreme excellence of its publication (for its publications were not in any way first rate) but to the fact that by its employment of the Press by pecuniary and other encouragement by affording a central place for the needed contact of mind to mind it gave such an impetus to Bengali learning as was never given by any other institution since the establishment of the British rule. It is true that the books published under its patronage and generally for the use of its students were not more numerous or more substantial than those of the famous School Book Society of later times but it must be admitted that the list presents a long series of important compositions in the vernacular and classical languages of the East on a variety of subjects and comprehends many works which though written expressly for young civilian students were at one time widely celebrated in this country and which have not



yet lost all their value and interest. But this was not all. The College was the seminary of western learning in an eastern dress, it helped to diffuse western ideas through the medium of the vernacular. But at the same time, orientalism was its principal feature, and it turned the attention of students and scholars to the cultivation of oriental languages, both classical and vernacular. "The establishment of the College of Fort William" said Sir George Barlow at the first Disputation of the College held so early as 1802 "has already excited a general attention to oriental language, literature and knowledge"<sup>1</sup>. We can realise what this means when we bear in mind the general neglect and oblivion to which Bengali literature and Bengali education had hitherto been consigned. The Honourable Visitor of 1815 in remarking on the encouragement held out by the College for the study of the leading oriental languages observed that previously to the foundation of the College "the language of Bengal was generally neglected and unknown"<sup>2</sup>. The best scholars and the greatest intellects of the country met here in friendly intercourse, and we shall see how an attractive personality like Carey's drew around it a band of enthusiastic writers, bent upon removing the poverty of their vernacular. At the invitation and inducement of such scholars, literary works were undertaken by the enlightened Bengali community as well as by the Munshis and Pundits of the College who would

<sup>1</sup> Roebuck, *Annals of the College of Fort William* (1819), p. 17, *The College of Fort William 1805* ed. by Claudius Buchanan, Vice Provost & Professor of the College (See Pearson's *Memoirs of Rev Claudius Buchanan*, 1819, vol. 1, p. 202 foot note) containing all the official papers and literary proceedings of the College, p. 58 at p. 62, See also Seton Kurr, *Selections from Cal. Gazette*, vol. III, p. 296-99 etc.

<sup>2</sup> Roebuck, *op. cit.* p. 468

possibly have produced nothing but for the stimulus thus given to their literary zeal and the encouragement yielded by the liberality of the government which would have never otherwise been so readily called into being<sup>1</sup> The movement for undertaking literary and scientific works in Bengali prose and for translation into that language which till 1850 had been so conspicuous an activity in the literary history of Bengal had its beginning in the publi-

cations of the College of Fort William<sup>2</sup> and in the zeal of its scholars aided no doubt by the fact

that exigencies of education and spread of liberal ideas naturally brought on a multiplication of text-books and books of general interest It is true speaking generally that the productions of these devoted scholars consisting as they do mostly of school books and translations are far from being invulnerable in point of literary merit yet to them belongs the credit of breaking fresh ground and creating the all important Bengali prose-of-all work. Not that we have no Bengali prose before this but it was hardly in current use and not so developed as to be the medium of everyday thoughts of the nation<sup>3</sup> No one can claim for this early prose the finish and all expressiveness of latter day prose but it cannot be denied that here

This was a pet scheme of Wellesley's so the liberality of the Government was magnificent.

The popular opinion aided, no doubt, by the extreme scarcity of these publications in the present day as well as by ignorant or careless criticism, often deriving its informations second hand that these publications were seldom or never read, is not borne out by contemporary allusions referring to these works and their extensive sale, running them through numerous editions within half a century Most of these publications afforded an endless quarry of fables and stories, always interesting to an oriental reader

See App. I

we have, if not art, at least craftsmanship, if precisely no work of genius, at least the hint and intimation of such close at hand

The College of Fort William which was actually in operation from May 4, 1800<sup>1</sup> was formally established on August 18 by a Minute in Council in which the Governor-General detailed at length the reasons for starting such an institution<sup>2</sup>. No sooner did Lord Wellesley find himself freed from the uncongenial bonds of war in the South than he devoted himself to various measures of internal administration with an ardour seldom equalled except perhaps by Lord Bentinck whom he so closely resembled. The Company's Civil Service, although it produced a few men of first-rate ability, had sunk into the lowest depths of vice and ignorance. The Service had its origin in a mercantile staff, well-versed in the mysteries of the counting-house, and its training, since the Factory had grown into an Empire, had not been sufficient for the more important duties which now devolved upon it. The system which Burke had reprobated fifteen years ago was still unchanged, and lads of fifteen to eighteen were being sent out to India before their education could be finished, with no opportunity or inducement on their arrival to complete it. At the close of three or four years' residence, the young Civilians, endowed with an affluent income and unchecked authority, had not only lost the fruits of their European studies and gained no useful knowledge of

<sup>1</sup> The First Term of the College commenced from February 6, 1801

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes in Council at the Fort William* by His Excellency the Most Hon'ble Marquis of Wellesley, containing his reasons for the establishment of a College in Bengal, dated August 18, 1800 (See Roebuck, *op cit* p vi and Buchanan, *op cit* p 89)

Asiatic literature or business but were absolutely abandoned to pursue their own inclination without guidance or control. Of the languages and manners of the people whose affairs they were called upon to administer they were not required to know even the rudiments.<sup>1</sup> The

Minute denounced in the strongest terms the absolute insufficiency of this class of young men to execute the duties of any station whatsoever in the Civil Service of the Company beyond the menial laborious and unprofitable duty of a mere copying clerk. It became evident that there could be no substantive improvement without providing a succession of men sufficiently qualified to conduct it. The Civil Servants of the English East India Company says the Minute<sup>2</sup> can no longer be considered as the agents of a commercial concern they are in fact the ministers and officers of a powerful sovereign they must now be viewed in that capacity with a reference not to their nominal but to their real occupation.<sup>3</sup> Their studies the discipline of their education their habits of life their manners and morals should therefore be so ordered and regulated as to establish a sufficient

It appears from the proceedings of the Governor-General in Council dated as far back as Sep 10 1790 that with a view to the acquisition of the Indian languages by the Company's writers, encouragement was afforded by offering them allowance and other facilities (Beton Karr *Selections from Cal. Gazette* II. 213-14) but it was never enjoined upon them as a matter of duty or necessity.

Roobuck, *op. cit.* p. iv; Buchanan, *op. cit.* pp. 5-6

See Beton Karr *op. cit.* vol III pp 22-23. Before the formal establishment of the College, Dr Olchrist, an eminent Hindustani scholar was appointed provisionally by Lord Wellesley to find out if an experiment of lecturing to young Civilians could be made successful. It succeeded splendidly as appears from the Report of the Committee appointed to ascertain the progress made in Olchrist's class (Roobuck, *op. cit.* pp. 114; Beton Karr *Selections from Cal. Gazette* vol III pp 58-61) After this the scheme of Fort William College was set on foot.

correspondence between their qualifications and their duties" The Minute then declares that "A College is hereby founded at Fort William in Bengal for the better instruction of the Junior Civil Servants of the Company" The institution was projected on a scale of magnificence which marked all the plans of Lord Wellesley, but under the pressure of the authorities at home, who were deady opposed to the institution and without whose sanction and acquiescence it had been set up, the College was continued on a reduced scale <sup>1</sup>

The range of studies marked out for the students in the College was very extensive and one of its most striking features was its orientalism The curriculum, subsequently modified, was intended to include in its grand scale "Arabic, Persian, Sanskrit, Hindusthani, Bengali, Telugu, Mahratti, Tamil, Kanara", besides "Laws and Regulations, Political Economy, Modern Languages, Greek, Latin, English Classics, General History ancient and modern, History of India, Natural History, Botany, Chemistry and Astronomy" <sup>2</sup> The College was patronised by the Governor-General himself, his colleagues, and the Judges of the Supreme Court, for it was considered to be one of the most important institutions of the State and the senior members of the Government were required in virtue of their office to take a share in its management

Public disputations in oriental languages were held annually in the grand edifice which Wellesley had erected, in an august assembly, composed of men of high rank

<sup>1</sup> The College continued till 1854, but since the foundation of School Book Society and Hindu College in 1817, its importance was overshadowed and diminished

<sup>2</sup> Roebuck, *op cit.* p 2411

It would interest Bengali readers to learn that debates were held in Bengali and the subject at the First Public Disputation held in February 6, 1802 was 'Whether the Asiatics are capable of as high degree of civilisation as Europeans.' The theses read by the students were published and they afford us some of the earliest specimens of sustained prose writing attempted by Europeans. We give below the theses pronounced at a disputation in Bengali in the Second Public Disputation held on March 29 1803 by James Hunter although we have as we shall see better specimens of prose-writing even before this date. This would however serve as the *average* specimen of European prose of the time. There are some quaint turns of phrases a few inevitable mistakes of idiom and syntax and errors of orthography and the style is a little too crude and sanscritised, yet if we compare with it the contemporary prose of *Pratāpāditya Charitra* (1801) and *Lipimāla* (1802) this specimen will hardly be at a disadvantage with them in many respects. The scarcity of the publications which

Theses by the students  
of the College

Reports of the annual Disputations till 1819 will be found in detail in Roebuck, *op. cit.* Also in Buchanan, *op. cit.* till 1806; and also see Beton-Karr *op. cit.* p. 200; also in *Primitias Orientales*, vols. I III.

Some of the students of the College published notable works. In 1808 Henry Barjont, who was a distinguished student of Bengali in the College (See Roebuck *op. cit.* pp. 178-180 218-221) translated the first four books of the *Æneid* or *Iliad* (the first book according to Long's *Catalogue* came out in 1805). Monckton, another student, translated Shakespeare's *Tempest* (*Cal. Rev.* 1850, Art. Beng. Lit.) Long, however followed by Dinesh-chandra Sen (*op. cit.* p. 876) mistakes the name of Henry Barjont for J. Serjeant. From Roebuck *op. cit.* it appears that there was no student in the College bearing the name of J. Serjeant, and no such person, it would seem from Dodwell and Miles *op. cit.* ever entered the Civil Service.

contain these theses will be a sufficient excuse for the length of the quotation. The subject was "The Distribution of Hindus into Castes and their progress in improvement"

হিন্দুলোকেরা ভি। ভি। জাতি এই প্রকৃত তাহাবদেব বিচারক্সি  
হানি হয়।

মানুষদেবদেব নীতিজ্ঞতা এবং শক্ততা প্রাণিসমাদিন্দনকার নখন আনবা

Thesis at the Second  
Disputation reproduced,  
as the average spec-  
imen of the Euro-  
peanised Bengali prose  
of the time

দেখি তখন আনবা নিয়ন্ত্রণ হই সকলে বুঝে  
দে ভিন্ন দেশীয় গোবদাদেব ভি। ভি। জাতি  
এই ব্যবস্থা যে আপন আপন স্বভাব এবং গ্রীষ্ম  
শীতের ঔণ বহু দেশীয় ব্যবস্থাপকেরা ব্যবস্থা-

করণ কালে এই ছই কবণ প্রবান কবিনা মানিয়াছেন সর্বদেবে পৃথক  
পৃথক ব্যবস্থাব সংসারবেব চপন নিমিত্ত অবস্থ নাহু হইয়াছে।

কোন দেশীয় লোকেরা এ পথ নোনা বাণিজ্যে নাহাত কোন  
বুদ্ধিমান লোক যদি গতি নোচ হয় তথাচ গতি উত্তম ক্রিয়া কবিত্তে  
পাবে এবং নহা সম্বন পায় এবং অল্প দেশীয় লোকেরা ভি। ভি। জাতি  
মধ্যে অনবদীয় প্রাচীরেব জ্ঞান ভিন্ন ভিন্ন ব্যবস্থাব ব্যবধান কবিনাছে  
এবং এগন অননুষ্ঠা ভাবি ব্যবস্থাবে নিয়ম কবিনা বিখ্যাপিব ইচ্ছা  
এবং উত্তম হওনেব চেষ্টা স্বকিত কবিনাছে প্রকৃত হিন্দুস্থানেব  
লোকেরদেব এই নত তাহাবদেব ব্যবস্থায় নতানীতি এবং অতিশয় বিজ্ঞা  
প্রকাশিত হয় কিন্তু তবে কি ভাল বুঝিয়া পৃথক পৃথক জাতিব নিয়ম  
কবিল ইহাব কবণ বুঝা কঠিন ববং ইহাতে এইনত বুঝা যায় যে  
অহংকৃত অজ্ঞানী অনাকানী লোকেরা অথেষ মহৎ লোপ কবিনা আপন  
আপন নহংকব বাহন্য কবিনাছে এবং বিজ্ঞা ও বুদ্ধি কতৃক আবোপিত  
ভক্তি ও মূর্ত্যব যে পবাজব সে এই বন ও সনাদেব পাওনেব নিমিত্ত এবং  
লোকেরদেব মনেব শাস্তা হওনেব নিমিত্ত এবং প্রকাবাণ্ডবে বাজ্যশাসন  
কবিত্তে না পাবিনা এই প্রকাবে লোকেরদেব শাসন নিমিত্ত অজ্ঞানী  
যাজকতা জাতিবিভেদ সৃষ্টি কবিল।

ব্রাহ্মণেরা বলে সৃষ্টারম্ভে ঈশ্বর পৃথক পৃথক চারিধর্ম স্বজন করিলেন ব্রাহ্মণ কত্রির বৈষ্ণব শূদ্র ইহাদিগের পৃথক পৃথক দর্শ্যচারি। দ্বিজধর্ম এই ব্রাহ্মচারি ব্রহ্মন ব্রহ্মন অধ্যয়ন অধ্যাপন দান প্রতিগ্রহণ ইত্যাদি কত্রিচারি। রাজধর্ম ব্রাহ্মণরক্ষণ বহুবিজ্ঞানভ্যাসন শিষ্ট শালিন চরিত্রময় রাজ্যশাসন প্রজাপালন শ্রায্য করগ্রহণ বৈষ্ণবভক্তি কবিকর্ম এবং বাণিজ্য শূদ্রের ধর্ম ব্রাহ্মণ সেবানিহা।

দেখ ব্রাহ্মণ চরিত্র যদি নীচবৃত্তি করে তবে তাহার নীচত্ব প্রাপ্তি হয় এবং অজ্ঞোভ্য বাবৎ জাতি সমগ্র এই এইমত ইহাতে সমস্ত লোক আপন আপন জাতি রক্ষণার্থে স্বধর্মনিষ্ঠ থাকে তাহার অজ্ঞতা করে না ইহাতে জানা যায় যদি কোন লোক আপন জাতির বিশেষ কর্ম লম্বাবহি না কবে তবে তাহার স্তম্ভাতি হানি হয় তাহার কিছু ক্ষতি হয় তাহার কিছুই থাকেনা। স্তম্ভাতি গেলে কোন নিম্নাতে ইচ্ছা হয় না কেন না স্তম্ভাতি ও জাতি পুনর্বার হইতে পারে না এমন লোকও পূর্ন বহু বেশিলে মন স্ফীড়া পার এবং সেই লোকও আপন পূর্ন বহু আপন সমান করিতে সক্ষমত্বক্রমে চেষ্টা পার।

হিন্দুধর্মের পৃথক পৃথক হওয়া সকল বিজ্ঞা হওনের প্রতিবন্ধক পুত্র যদি পৈতৃক বিজ্ঞা ভিন্নাভি বিজ্ঞাভ্যাসন ইচ্ছুক হয় এবং যোগ্য বুঝা যায় সে পুত্র আপন জাতি রক্ষা প্রবুদ্ধ স্বীয় অভিলষিত নিম্নাতে প্রবর্ত হইতে পারে না এই তাহার বুদ্ধি-মুর্ধির বাধক হয় তাহার স্থল এই যদি কোন শূদ্র বেদবেদান পাঠ কবে তবে হিন্দুধর্মের শাস্ত্রমত এই মত কর্তব্য মতাসে জিহ্বাছেদন করিবেক ইচ্ছাপূর্বক তাহা প্রবণ করিলে সে শূদ্রের কর্ণেতে তপ্ত সীসা প্রদান করিবেক আর শূদ্র হইয়া যদি বেদের অর্থ মনেতে ধারণ করে তবে তাহাকে বধ করিতে হয়।

অত্র শাস্ত্র যদি ভাবাতে তর্কনা করে তবে সংস্কৃত শাস্ত্রের পৌরষ হানি প্রবুদ্ধ তাহাও অস্ত্যাতি হয় যেমন মহাভারতের তর্কনা ভাবাতে কানীদাস নামে এক শূদ্র করিরাছিল সেই দোষেতে ব্রাহ্মণেরা তাহাকে শাপ দিরাছিল সেই ভয়েতে অত্র কেহ এখন সে কর্ম কবে না।



হিন্দুলোকেবা যদিও আপন শাস্ত্রেব নিশ্চয়তে থাকে তবে অগ্র দেশেব বিথা ও ব্যবহাব যদি ভালও হয় তবুও তাহা গ্রহণ কবিতে পাবে না যদি অগ্র দেশেব বিথা ও ব্যবহাব দেখে কিম্বা স্নানে তথাপি তুচ্ছ কবিয়া আদব কবে না অতএব অগ্র লোকেব ব্যবহাবেতে তাহাবদেব জ্ঞানলাভ হইতে পাবিবে না ।

অগ্র দেশেব গমন ও অগ্র দেশেব ব্যবহাব দর্শন ও অগ্রদেশেব বিথাভ্যাসেতে লোকেব বুদ্ধিব বৃদ্ধি হয় হিন্দুলোকেবদেব শাস্ত্রেব মতে পশ্চিমে আটক নদী পাব হইলে জাতি যায় উত্তবে ভোটাস্তব এবং স্লেচ্ছদেশেও সেই মত এবং একপুত্র পাব হইলে পূৰ্ব্বধৰ্ম্ম নষ্ট হয় । দপিনে সমুদ্রপথে জাহাজে থাকিবা ভোজন পান কবিলে জাতি যায় । হিন্দু শাস্ত্রেব মতে গোখাদকেব সংসর্গ কবিলেও দোষ হিন্দুছাড়া যত লোক সকলেই গোমাংস খায় অতএব হিন্দুবা তাহাবদেব সহিত সহবাস কবিতে পাবে না এবং যেমত নির্জন উপদ্বীপে কোন ব্যক্তি একাকী থাকে সেইমত এই একাদাডিয়া বীতিতে তাহাবদেব বুদ্ধি প্রতিভা জড়িত হইয়াছে এবং তাহাবদেব উত্তোগ শিথিল হইয়া অবিনীততা ও শুদ্ধতা হইয়াছে, এই ইয়ুবোপীয়েবদেব মধ্যে দম্ভ্য প্রভৃতি অধম লোক হইতেও অধম, কেননা ইহাবা স্বস্থান ত্যাগ কবিয়া স্ক্রিম্মাস্থিত হইলে তাহাবদেব স্মৃতি পুনর্কীব হইতে পাবে কিন্তু ইহাবদেব কখন ভাল হইতে পাবে না হিন্দুবা শাস্ত্রব্যবস্থা কিম্বা মাত্র লোকেবা যাদৃচ্ছিক আঞ্জা লঙ্ঘন কবিলেই অপাব দুস্বসাগবে পড়ে ।

জাতিরূপ হাপা কেবল বুদ্ধিবুদ্ধিব হানি কবে না ববং ভিন্নদেশে পবম্পব গমনাগমনেব বাধক হয় পরোপকাবক জ্ঞান সঙ্কয়েতে কুপণতা প্রকাশ হয় । অগ্র দেশীয় লোকেবদেব সংসর্গ হইতে উৎপাদ্য যে জ্ঞান ও বিতাকপ উন্নত জাতিকত্বক বন্ধ হইয়াছে তাহাতে তাহাবা অগ্রদেশীয় বিশেব বিববণ ও ভূগোলবিথা ও মহানাবিক বিথা ও অঙ্গচিকিৎসা বিথা ও প্রাণিবিথা ও বৃক্ষাদিবিথা ও জ্যোতিববিথা ও যুদ্ধবিথা ইত্যাদি আব আব উত্তম বিতাকে অঙ্গ হইয়াছে বিধান লোক স্বদেশে উৎপন্ন না হইলে বিতাবুদ্ধি হইতে পাবে না নাবিকবিথাদ্বাবা

আমাদের আর সকল ভাল হইল এবং যে নূতন বিভাগে লোকেরদের উত্তর উত্তর সুখবৃদ্ধি হয় তাহা প্রকাশ করণের দ্বারা সেই বিভাগ লোকেরদের মনের তেজকারি হয় কিন্তু হিন্দুরা সমুদ্রসমন করে না অন্তএব এ সকল হইতে দূর থাকে।

আমি জানি যে তোমরা ইহা অস্তথা বলিয়া যেখানে ইয়ুরোপীয়েরা থাকে হিন্দুলোকেরা তাহারদের সেবা করে এবং তাহারদের সহিত ব্যবহার করে ইহাতে হিন্দুলোকেরদের জাতি যায় না ও অখ্যাতি হয় না ইহা আমি বীকার করি না কেননা, যদি কোন সভাবারী হিন্দুলোককে বিজ্ঞান করা যায় তবে সে অবশ্য বলিবেক যে এমন ব্যবহার করে তাহার জাতি নাই কেননা এই প্রকার অনেক লোক এবং অনেক লোক বনবান হওনেতে কেহ কাহাকে কিছু বলে না। এ সকল বিচার করিয়া আমি বুঝি যে ভিন্ন ভিন্ন জাতি প্রযুক্ত বিভাগস্থির হানি হয়।<sup>1</sup>

Carey was appointed teacher of Bengali and Sanscrit languages<sup>2</sup> in April 1801. In January 1 1807 he was raised to the status of a Professor<sup>3</sup>

Carey appointed  
Teacher and Professor  
of Bengali

and he continued till 1831 to be the most notable figure in the College of Fort William. This appointment

threw Calcutta open to him as a field of work and for the next thirty years from 1801 he spent as much of his time in the metropolis as at Srirampur. He found the appointment bringing in its train responsible duties but it afforded him an early opportunity not only to cultivate the beautiful language of Bengal<sup>4</sup> but also to enrich its literature by his own labours as well as by the labours of others whom he induced to work in the same field. He himself not only wrote

*Primitive Orient lex*, vol. II 1803, pp 67-74 containing theses in the Oriental languages pronounced at the Public Disputations by the Students of the College of Fort William with translations.

Afterwards of the M h ratt language

Roebuck, *op cit* Appendix iv p 52 at p 54; Buch *op cit* p. 236 at p 237

a grammar, compiled a dictionary, and composed text-books but he was at the same time the centre of the learned Bengalis, whom by his zeal he attracted around him as pundits and munsis, as inquirers and visitors. The impetus which he gave to Bengali learning is to be measured not merely by his productions or by his educational labours at this institution or at Śrināmpur but also by the influence he had exerted and the example he had set before an

His influence and the impetus he gave to literature

admiral public who soon took up his work in earnestness. He had gathered around him a number of scholars who were at first his teachers but whom he had succeeded in employing in extensive literary work. Of the fifteen munsis<sup>1</sup> who taught Bengali in the College, the chief was his own pundit, Mrtyuñāy, who wrote some of the most learned and elaborate treatises of the time. He induced three other pundits of the College, Rām Basu, Rājib-lochan and Chandīcharan, to undertake the composition of vernacular works and he always befriended those who took any interest in the vernacular literature. It was at his suggestion and encouragement that Mohan-prasād Thākuri, assistant Librarian to the College of Fort William, compiled his *English-Bengali Vocabulary*<sup>2</sup> (1810) which he dedicated to Dr Carey. It

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan, *op cit* p 239

<sup>2</sup> *A Vocabulary Bengali and English* for the use of students, arranged in alphabetical order under different subjects, by Mohan Prasād Thākuri (1810), 2nd Ed 1815, 3rd Edition 1852. *The Calcutta Review* (1852) speaks of it as "exceedingly useful to all students of the Bengali language." On the doubtful authority of Rev. Long (*Catalogue*) the date of this book is fixed to be 1805 by Mr Sen (*History*, pp 866-67). The copy (2nd Edition) in the library of the Board of Examiners bears 1815 as the date of publication. Mohan Prasād was appointed Librarian to the College in October, 1807 (Roebuck, *op cit* App III p 51) so he could not have compiled this work at the suggestion of Carey before this date. See also Preface to Haughton's *Dictionary*

is needless to multiply examples of works which owed their origin to his suggestion and influence but these will go to show how attractive his personality and how extensive his influence had been among his collaborators in the field. When the appointment was made<sup>1</sup> he writes on June 10 1801 'I saw that I had a very important charge committed to me. I therefore set about compiling a grammar which is now half printed. I got Ram Ram Basu to compose a history of one of their kings, which we are also printing. Our Pundit<sup>2</sup> has also nearly translated the Sungskrit fables which we are also going to publish. These with Mr. Forster's *Vocabulary* will prepare the way to reading their poetical books so that I hope this difficulty will be gotten through.'<sup>3</sup> Thus Carey's College room became the centre of incessant literary work as his Srirampur study had been of Bible-translation. We can imagine the indefatigable scholar in his chamber sitting with his Munshi for three or four hours daily mastering the language in all its complications and with a longing to educate the people writing and translating hour by hour into Bengali tongue the books which he thought useful for that purpose and which contains the first systematic pieces of spirited Bengali prose.

Thus although the College of Fort William was founded to fulfil a political mission its usefulness and its importance never ended there. The impetus which it gave as a centre of learning and culture to the cause of vernacular language and literature gives it a prominent place in the literary history of the time. No doubt its greatest achievement in the history of

The orientalism of  
the College; its effect

intellectual progress in this country consists in its revival of the ancient culture of the land, its all-comprehensive orientalism daring far beyond the intrepid dreams of scholars like Sir William Jones, Wilkins, and Colebrooke. But this orientalism embraced a great deal more than a mere revival of classical learning. Attention hitherto had never been turned to vernacular learning in this country which was in a sadly neglected state at the beginning of the century. The College of Fort William, by its encouragement of the vernacular, first brought it into public notice and fostered and nourished it.

The list of its publications between 1800 and 1825 comprises, besides 31 works in Hindusthani, 24 in Sanscrit, 20 in Arabic, and 21 in Persian, the following principal works in Bengali<sup>1</sup> chronologically arranged

- 1801 *Pratāpāditya Charita*<sup>1</sup> by Ram Ram Basu  
*A Grammar of the Bengalee Language* by W Carey  
*Kathopakathan*<sup>2</sup> by William Carey  
*Hitopadeś* translated by Golak-nāth Śarmā

<sup>1</sup> This list is based on the lists given in Roebuck, *op cit* App II, p 29 (A Catalogue of all the Oriental works published under the patronage of the College of Fort William since its Institution in 1800 up to August 15, 1818), in Buchanan, *op cit* (List of books printed and published by the Fort William College before 1805) pp 219-236, in *Primitiae Orientales* (vols II III p xlv), and on the enumeration in Long's *Catalogue* which, however, is not always reliable. In all these cases where (with the one or two exceptions mentioned) I have been able to avail myself of the original editions, I have compared and verified the dates here given. Particulars or details about these works will be found in their proper places below, where each of them has been reviewed in its turn.

<sup>2</sup> It seems to have been published a month later than *Pratāpāditya Charita*.

- 1802 *Lipinālā*<sup>1</sup> by Ram Ram Basu  
*Butriś Śiṃhāsan* translated by Mr̥tyuñjaya Bidyā-  
 laukār
- 1803 *Aesop's Fables* translated<sup>2</sup> into Bengali under the  
 direction and superintendence of Dr J Gil-  
 christ, by Tūrinīcharan Mitra
- 1805 *Ṭoṭa Itihāś* translated from Persian by Chandī  
 charan Munsī  
*Rājā Kṛṣṇachandra Rayer Charitra* by Rājib  
 Lochan Mukhopādīyāv
- 1808 *Rājabālī* by Mr̥tyuñjaya Bidyālaukār  
*Hitopadeś* by Mr̥tyuñjaya Bidyālaukār  
*Hitopadeś*<sup>3</sup> by Rām kiśor Tarkālaukār
- 1812 *Itihāś malā*<sup>4</sup> by William Carey
- 1813 *Prabodh-chandrika*<sup>5</sup> by Mr̥tyuñjaya Bidyālaukār
- 1815 *Parus-parīkṣā* translated by Haraprasād Rāy
- 1815 1825 *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language* by  
 William Carey Vol I (The last volume was published in  
 1825)

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In Buchanan *op. cit.* and *Premises* *O. estates* no name of the author is given, but he is simply described as a "learned native in the College"

This work is also mentioned by Long but not in connexion with the publication of the Fort William College.

Mentioned and dated by Roebuck. I have not been able to obtain sight of the work. In the list of Pundits in the College in 1818 Roebuck mentions Rām-kiśor Tarkachādamapī (appointed November 1806) in the Bengal Department.

Doubtful whether a publication of the College not officially recorded to be such

Published in 1833, long after the death of the author with a preface by J Marahma. Hence not mentioned by Roebuck but known conclusively to be a publication for the use of the College from the testimony of Carey Marahman and others.

Barring a few independent works here and there these were all the best publications and the chief writers in Bengali between 1800 and 1825 <sup>1</sup>

Even if we leave aside publications which are indirectly due to his instigation or encouragement, it will be seen that Carey's works in Bengali Carey's share in the work was not inconsiderable Besides the translation of the Bible and numerous Christian tracts, Carey's works in Bengali consist chiefly of the following books

(1) *A Grammar of the Bengalee Language* Printed at the Mission Press Serampore 1801 (2nd Edition<sup>2</sup> with alterations 1805, 3rd Ed 1815, 4th Ed 1818, 5th Ed 1845 )

(2) *Kathopakathan, or Colloquies or Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquiring of the Bengalee Language* Printed at the Mission Press Serampore August,

<sup>1</sup> In Buchanan *op cit* there is a list of books printed during 1803 or in course of publication during the year 1804, at p 238 In it we find mentioned a work, of which, however, there is no record in Roebuck or anywhere else, viz Translation of the Bhagabadgītā from Sanscrit into Bengali by Chandī Charan Munsī It is not known whether it ever saw the light In *Primit Orient* vol II p 1-11, we find the entry of another publication, long supposed to be a missionary publication only and not mentioned in the official records whether of Buchanan or of Roebuck, viz The Old and the New Testament, translated into the Bengali Language, in 2 vols It seems to be a reprint of the Śrīrāmpur edition, or even the identical publication, transferred to the list of the publications of the Fort William College

<sup>2</sup> The date of the 2nd Edition is given as 'before 1803' in Buchanan, *op cit* p 222, E Carey, *op cit* p 474 But Grierson, *Linguistic Survey*, vol V, pt 1, p 24 says that the 2nd edition was published in 1805, and Wilson (*Life and Labours of Carey*) corroborates it In the tenth *Memor* of the Śrīrāmpur mission, the date of the 2nd Ed is given as 1805 Dinesh Ch Sen (*Hist of Beng Lit* p 857) rather inaccurately states that the book passed through four editions before 1855

1801 (3rd Ed 1818) Originally a part of the Bengali Grammar. The title varies slightly in different editions.

(3) *Itika malā* or a collection of stories in the Bengali language collected from various sources. Serampore. Printed at the Mission Press. 1812.

(4) *A Dictionary of the Bengalee Language* in which words are traced to their origin and their meanings are given in 2 vol. Vol I 1813 (Vol II 1823). Vol I reprinted in 1818. The second volume in 2 parts. All Bengali English. Printed at the Mission Press Serampore.

Carey's enthusiasm for Bengali and his patient scholarship are nowhere displayed better than in his industrious compilation of the *Bengali Grammar* and the *Bengali English Dictionary*. This was indeed the age of grammars and dictionaries, and the name of grammarians<sup>2</sup> and lexicographers who after Carey followed in the footsteps of Hallied and Forster is legion but none of the works

Rev. Long's *Relation of the Names of 316 Persons connected with the Literature* (p. 100) mention among Carey's works a treatise or pamphlet called *Letter to Lal*. It seems that the *Address to Lal* which was written not by Carey but by Pearce of Birmingham was translated by Carey (see E. C. Carey op. cit. p. 463; also Murdoch, *Chronicle of Christian Vernacular Literature of India* p. 5). Carey also wrote other missionary tracts which it is not necessary to mention here.

The first Bengali Grammar by a native grammarian is said to be that by G. G. K. or B. B. (Icharya) written in the form of a dialogue. It was published in 1810 (Long *Chronicle*). This also seems to be incorrect. We find the first announcement of this work in the *Sambach Darpan* (Oct 3, 1818) from which it would appear in the first place that the book was published about 1818; and secondly that it was not only a grammar but a compendium of miscellaneous information and that the portion dealing with grammar did not relate to Bengali language but that it was an English Grammar in Bengali. See my article in *Dakshin Bāhūya P. risat Patrikā*, vol. xxiv p. 151.



of these writers except perhaps Haughton's *Glossary* and Keith's *Grammar* (popularly called Ket-Byākaran) obtained the reputation and currency which Carey's scholarly works

did. Carey's *Grammar* was composed 1801 Carey's *Grammar*, more than twenty years after Halhed's

*Grammar*. Halhed's was indeed a work of merit, but in the interval that had elapsed between its appearance and the institution of public lectures in the Fort William College, it had probably become scarce, and was no longer available for the needs of the students of the College. To Halhed indeed belongs the credit of first reducing to rule the construction of the

Bengali language, and Carey must have derived much help from him.<sup>1</sup> But though ostensibly modelled on

Halhed's work, Carey's *Grammar* was altogether a new and original contribution to the scientific study of the language, for Carey had an opportunity of "studying the language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely" than had been done before. Whilst acknowledging the aid he had derived from Halhed, Carey observes (1st Ed 1801) "I have made some distinctions and observations not noticed by him, particularly on the declension of nouns and verbs and the use of participles." In the preface to the second edition (1805) he says "Since the first edition of this work was published, the writer had had an opportunity of studying this language with more attention and of examining its structure more closely than he had done before. The result of his studies he has endeavoured to give in the following papers which, on account of the variations from the former editions, may be esteemed a new work." The

<sup>1</sup> E Carey, *op cit* p 247

variations alluded to above refer to the alterations and additions particularly in the declension and derivation of nouns and in the conjugation of verbs extending the grammar to nearly double its original size. The later editions however do not differ materially from the second edition.

Another merit of this *Grammar* arises from the fact that Carey seems to have realised very early that the basis of the vernacular language must be sought in its classical

The basis of the progenitor and this fact enables him language and of the to examine critically the ultimate grammar

structure of the language and evolve rigid rules fixing the chaotic colloquialism and dialectal variety of the vernacular into definite forms. A living language however can never be regulated by artificial rules borrowed from a dead language however closely connected they might be with each other and Carey in giving full scope to colloquial and temporal variations shows himself fully alive to this fact. Rules of Sanskrit Grammar can never suffice for the study of Bengali yet one can never wholly dispense with Sanskrit Grammar in framing a grammar for its vernacular off-shoot. A truly scientific grammar of Bengali must avoid these extremes and Carey who had a wonderful knowledge of the vernacular as it was spoken and written as well as of the classical Sanskrit succeeded to a great extent in steering through the middle path.

The *Bengali Grammar* of Carey explains the peculiarities of the Bengali alphabet and the combination of its letters

the declension of substantives and  
 Scope of the book. formation of derivative nouns inflections of adjectives and pronouns and  
 the conjugation of verbs. It gives copious lists and

descriptions of indeclinable verbs, adverbs, prepositions, etc., and closes with syntax and with an appendix of numerals and tables of weights and measures. The rules are comprehensive, though expressed with brevity and simplicity, and the examples, though derived from only a few of the standard works, are sufficiently numerous and well-chosen. There are many defects and inevitable errors but they are sufficiently obvious and excusable to require any comment and do not materially affect the value of the book. The syntax, however, is the least satisfactorily illustrated part but this defect was fully remedied by a separate publication, originally forming a supplement, printed also in 1801, of *Kathopakathan* or *Dialogues* in *Kathopakathan* or Bengali, with a translation into English, comprising a great variety of idioms and phrases in current Bengali. Carey's extraordinary command over colloquial Bengali is nowhere better exhibited. There are, no doubt, occasional lapses and errors of idiom<sup>1</sup> which none but a man born to the language can easily realise, yet the extent and variety of topics, the different situations, and the different classes of men dealt with in these dialogues show not only a minute and sympathetic observation and familiarity with

Its rich vocabulary of current forms and idioms

<sup>1</sup> Carey, however, was so very careful to ensure correctness in this respect that he writes in the Preface "That the work might be as complete as possible, I have employed some sensible natives to compose dialogues upon subjects of a domestic nature, and to give them precisely in the natural style of the persons supposed to be speakers. I believe the imitation to be so exact that they will not only assist the student, but furnish a considerable idea of the domestic economy of the country." It will be seen therefore that the authorship of the entire book does not rest with him, but that the dialogues other than those of a domestic nature were his own. But even these surely reflect great credit on him as a scholar of Bengali.

the daily occupations of the people their manners feelings and ideas but also a thorough acquaintance with the resources of the language in its difficult colloquial forms. The book is indeed a rich quarry of the idioms (and even of the *slang* the class or professional shibboleth) of the spoken dialect of Bengal and in an age of mere or main translation, of tentative accumulation of vocabulary and experimental adaptation of arrangement its value is very great. But to this book belongs also the credit of making

an early and original attempt to give  
 Its picture of social life in Bengal. in a crude semi-dramatic form a

faithful reflection of the social life in Bengal as it existed a century ago. The class of men who are supposed to carry on these dialogues or colloquies ranges from that of a Shahib a respectable Bengali gentleman a merchant a zemindar and a Brūhman priest to that of a peasant a low class woman a day labourer a fisherman and a beggar. The more regular and measured language of the upper classes is put side by side with the loose style and talk of uncultured women and the lower orders in different situations. Independently of its merit as a help to the acquisition of the language this work presents in many respects a curious and lively picture of the manner of life led by the middle and lower classes. The faithfulness of this picture is

guaranteed by the fact that even in  
 Its realism the present day it has not lost all the force and precision of its realism. In his celebrated Sanscrit speech before Lord Wellesley at a public disputation of the College Carey speaking of his knowledge of the country said I now an old man have lived for a long series of years among the Hindoos. I have been in the habit of preaching to multitudes daily of discoursing

with the Brāhmans on every subject, and of superintending schools for the instruction of the Hindoo youth

Then language is as familiar to me as my own. This close intercourse with the natives for so long a period, and in different parts of our empire, had afforded me opportunities of information not inferior to those which have hitherto been presented to any other person. I may say indeed that their manners, customs, habits, and sentiments are as obvious to me as if I was myself a native”<sup>1</sup>

The colloquies begin with a sketch of the conversations of an English gentleman, his method of hiring servants, giving out orders, his desire of learning Bengali, his talks with his munsī etc. The preponderance of Persian words in these dialogues is thus explained by Carey himself. “A Khansama or a Sūkai, talking to an European (and *vice versa*) generally intermixes his language with words derived from Arabic or Persian and some few corrupted English and Portuguese words” (Preface). The rest of the colloquies deal with the conversations and ideas, mostly of the middle and lower classes of the people of Bengal, living in the remote villages. The colloquies may be conveniently arranged thus under different heads of subjects

- (1) Conversation relating to everyday life of middle-class country gentlemen
- (2) Talks about land, its cultivation, farming, produce, rent etc.
- (3) Talks about business matters *e.g.* between a debtor and his creditor etc.

<sup>1</sup> Buchanan, *op cit* Translation of the speech of Carey at p 168, also quoted in Smith, *op cit* pp 167-169, also Roebuck, *op cit* p 60

(4) Conversation 'both in friendly and contentious style between women of various types their going to market etc. (5) General talks about eating journeying taking counsel etc. (6) Conversation among lower classes of people e.g. labourers fishermen beggars etc.

Of the colloquies under heads (1) and (5) which are the more interesting of the whole group those entitled ভ্রমণোদে ভ্রমণোদে প্রাচীনে প্রাচীনে (A discourse of respectable old people) ঘটকানি (An agreement of marriage) বালক ও পুমান (A priest and his customer) and the last colloquy entitled simply কথোপকথন (Conversation) on the subject of marriage between two *ghatiks* are the best. The conversation of the *ghatiks* although a more subdued picture would remind one of the *ghatik* in *Rām nārāyaṇa* & *Amṛta kalā-sarbaṇa*. Some specimens of unconscious humour will be found in the measured formal speeches of the priests (in what Carey calls the grave style") as contrasted with the simple talks of laymen. We give below an extract from the first named of these colloquies which throws much light on the social life in the village and at the same time illustrates the more serious style of Carey in these dialogues —

An extract quoted  
in the grave style

ওঁহাৰ আত্মজন্মো কেমন আছেন।

ওঁহাৰা মহাৰাম চন্দ্রদেও ওঁহাৰদেব সহিও কৰি কথা ওঁহাৰদেব  
অতিযোগিতাৰ লোক আমাৰ দেশে নাই।

এবাবে কোঁ নীৰ কাৰ্য পাইয়া মহাবনাচ হইয়াছে ওঁহাৰদেব  
সমান বনীলোক আমাৰ দেশে চাকরী করিয়া হইতে পারে নাই।

কেনন বনীও নর বিবরণ অনেক করিয়াছে আজি লাগাএব কমবেশ  
লাকো টাকার অমিয়ারি করিয়াছে।

গমাই ডাগোর বন্ধকৃত বেগমিকি ওঁহাৰা কি ছিলেন এখন বা কি  
হইয়াছেন। এ আত্ম জন্মিলা কলাগাছ হইয়াছে।

তাঁহাবদেব পূৰ্ণ বিবৰণ আনবা নমুই জানি। নাতাপিতাব চুঃখেব  
পবিসীনা ছিলা না।

এতক্ষণে বড ভট্টাচাৰ্য্য কিছু দিভেন তবেই সে দিন নিৰ্দাহ হইত  
নতুবা হৰিণটুক।

এখন ঈশ্বৰ তাহাবদিগকে অতিশয় উন্নত কৰিয়াছেন ঈশ্বৰাধীন  
কৰ্ম্ম বডকে ছোট কবিত্তে পাবেন ছোটকেও বড কবিত্তে পাবেন।

আনি চিবকাল দেশছাড়া তাহাবদেব আহাব ব্যবহাব কি প্রকাৰ।

তাহাবদিগেব আহাব পৰিচ্ছদ ভাল বটে।

নিতান্ত আত্মীয় অন্তৰঙ্গ লোকেব উপকাৰ কবা আছে কিন্তু দানাদি  
সৰ্ব্বতোভাবে নাই।

ক্ৰিয়াকৰ্ম্ম এই ক্ষণে ব্ৰহ্মপ কবিত্তেছে সে নিৰ্দিষ্ট নয়।

কহ জমিদাৰি যে কৰিয়াছেন সে শাসিত কি প্রকাৰ।

জমিদাৰি কখন ছিলা না এই ক্ষণে হইবাছে কিন্তু শাসন সুন্দৰকপ  
কবিত্তে পাবে নাই এ বিষয়ে বিজ্ঞ নয় ইহাতে প্রজাণোকেবা স্তম্ভাতি  
কবে না।

কহ ব্ৰহ্মপ বডনাথুষ হইয়াছেন তাহাব মত চলন কিনা লওয়াজিনা  
কি মত।

লওয়াজিনা যেমত কৰিয়াছেন তাহাব মত ওঠক বৈঠক নয়।

নিত্যক্ৰিয়া কিৰূপ কবেন।

এক প্রহৰ দশ দণ্ডেব মধ্যে স্নান কৰিয়া পূজা বিশিষ্টকৰূপ কৰিয়া  
জলপান ভোজন কবেন কুটুম্ব সাক্ষাৎ যে থাকেন একএ ভোজন হয় না।

অতিথি সেবা হইয়া থাকে কি না। তাহাতে আমোদ  
("reputation" Carey) কেমন।

অতিথিসেবা কৰিয়া থাকেন বিশিষ্টকৰূপে হয় না। আমোদ সুন্দৰ নাই।

ঈশ্বৰসেবা কি বাবা কৰিয়াছেন।

ঈশ্বৰসেবা কবেন বটে কিন্তু বিশিষ্টকৰূপে নয় শিবলিঙ্গ ও বিগ্রহ ও  
শালগ্রাম সকলি সংস্থাপন কৰিয়াছেন।

বসবাসটা কেমন করিয়াছেন।

বাটা চতুর্দিকে চকমিলান করিয়া তিন চারি মহল করিয়াছেন।

তনিলান পক্ষাধানে গ্রামস্থ আর সকলেই আনিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে  
কিঞ্চন সকলকে ওষুণ্ডাস্ত করিয়াছেন।

ঈশ্বরী পক্ষাধানে আমেব আর সকল আনিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে  
তথাবধারণ বিভাগিত করিয়াছেন দানাদি বাহ্য্য বটে।

সারদার পূজা রচনা করিয়া থাকেন।

ঈশ্বর পূজাও বেশের অস্ত্র অস্ত্র লোক যে প্রকার করে তাহার অনেক  
বড়।

কমবেশ চারি পাঁচ হাজার টাকা ব্যয় ব্রাহ্মণ ভোজনাদি তিন  
দিন অস্ত্র অস্ত্র লোকে মিঠায় পাওয়াইয়া থাকেন বটে।

কস্তার বিবাহ দিয়াছেন কিনা।

যত কস্তার বিবাহ অষ্টমবর্ষে নৈকত্ব কুলীন আনিয়া দিয়াছেন। পাঁচটি  
সুত্রী ২৩৩ বটে।

বিবাহের সময় ব্যয় কি মত করিয়াছিলেন ঘটক কুলীনের আগমন  
কি মত হইয়াছিল তাহারদের বিবাহ কিঞ্চন করিয়াছেন।

কুলীন আর হই তিন শত ঘটকও পাঁচ ছয় শত আনিয়াছিল।  
তাহারদের বিবাহ যেমত করিয়াছিলেন তাহাতে সুখ্যাতি হইয়াছে।<sup>১</sup>

This is the specimen of the graver style but more colloquial and easy are the dialogues under the heads (2) and (3), although these colloquies it should be noticed as well as those between English gentlemen and his servants are full

*Dialogues intended to facilitate the acquirement of the Bengalee Language* by W. Carey D. D. Mission Press 1818. 1st Ed. pp. 66-85; 3rd Ed. pp. 36-40 See also 3rd Ed. pp. 108-110 (1st Ed. pp. 208-217) for the description of a marriage and the expenses incurred at the wedding



of Persian words which are comparatively absent in the domestic talk under other heads of subjects. Business matters have a language of their own, but Persian for a long time was the court-language and all business matters were transacted in that

Preponderance of Persian words of language Not only words like মালিক, দস্তকর্জা, খাতিবজনা, একবাব, সব্ব, নহগুন,

তজবিজ, জমিন, নজব which have become almost naturalised in Bengali but even unfamiliar words like তকসিব, তবজদ বব, নাকুল, এলান, আজান, এংবাব, খোভা, are frequently used. Of the other colloquies, that on "A Landlord and his tenant" ("জনিদাব বাইযত") too long, however, for quotation here, is the most remarkable as giving a true picture of the relation between the landlords and their tenants (3rd Ed pp 88-108)

The colloquies spoken by the lower orders are bound to be very interesting, but it is to be regretted that these

dialogues are very short and not very well-written and their number too

The language of the lower orders is small. The language here must of course differ considerably both in pronunciation and vocabulary from that already quoted. The following short extract will be found illustrative,

তিয়বিয়া কথা।

হাডে ভেগো মাচকে বাবি কি না আতিতো কোয়া কোয়া কবিছে।  
মুই ফুকাবছি তুই ঘুমাইছিস।

বা। এক কাপকড়ে আইয়াছে। হ্যা ম্যাগ পড়েছে এখন কি জাণে যাবাড সময়। যা চেনে তুই মুইতো এখন যাব না। কালি ঢেব আতি থাকিতে গিয়াছিছ। বাড বলে খাবাব মাচ পেছ না তাতে আজি ম্যাগ পড়েছে।

হাড়ে তাই মাথের তরে বোদের কাম চলে না ডা/বেতো মাগ  
ছাওরানকে ভাত কাপড় দিহু । তোর বড় দেবি পুকবাগের শকীল  
হইরাছে ।<sup>1</sup>

The colloquies of women are very faithful and realistic but some of the pictures are too gross  
The language of women and the language sometimes even  
borders on indecency<sup>2</sup> The ladies  
however who figure in these colloquies belong it seems  
mostly to the uncultured lower classes and here and  
there all Billingsgate seems to be let  
Grossness of tone loose at once It is true that  
and language women as Carey says speak a  
language considerably differing from that of the men  
especially in their quarrels yet he would be far from  
right if he supposes that this is the measure of women's  
talk in Bengal Quotations from these will not be

It is better to append Carey's translation of this passage here

#### *Fisherman's talk*

Haloo, Bhago will you go a fishin' g? 'Tis gettin' light I called  
You was asleep.

Aye, aye this is n excuse Hah, it rains is it tim to go to th  
nets now? Goye t n purpose. I wot go n w Yesterday I went  
long before light by so doin' g I did not get fish to eat, and to-day it  
rains.

You, brother my work w n't go no by the fear of clouds. Shall I  
be able to clothe and feed my wife and children thus? I see you  
have a body formed for ease (*Dialog es*, 1st Ed pp. 110 et seq,  
3rd Ed. pp. 56-57)

Possibly these dialogues were written by the sensible natives<sup>3</sup>  
whom Carey employed (*ideante* footnot p. 138) and who might have  
misled him. See especially the colloquy headed *বাইরা কলল* (W men  
Quarrel) beginn' g with 'তুমি কোথায় দিরাহিলা গাভা/বাড়ী (*Dialog es*,  
1st Ed. pp. 160-164; 3rd Ed. p. 82. et seq)

welcome but here is one dialogue in the "friendly style"  
 A finer picture sufficiently harmless and representa-  
 tive wherein the ladies seem to  
 belong the middle class

তোমরা ক'ন যা।

আমি সকলের বড আনাব আর তিন যা আছে।

কেমন যায় যায় ভাব আছে কি কালের মত।

আহা ঠাকুরালী আমাব যে আনা আমি সকলের বড আনাকে  
 তাহাবা অমুক-বুদ্ধিও কবে না।

আলো সকলেই কি একে।

না। তাহাব মধ্যে ছোট ছুঁড়ি ভালমানুষবেব নাইবা সেইতি আনাকে  
 উপবোধবাদ কবে।

ওবে তাহাবি সাথে তোমাব প্রীতি আছে।

প্রীতি আছে বটে। কিন্তু সকলে অসৎ তাহাতে সেও সেই মত  
 হয় বা।

সে এখন ছোট আছে তুই একটুকু আত্মা নমতা কবিস ওবে সে  
 তোবি কানোড়া হইবে।

আমাব কানোড়া হবে সে এমন কানোড়া হবাব যোগ্য নয় বাঁশ  
 হইতে কঞ্চি দড়।

ওবে যে বলিলি সে কিছু ভাল।

ভাল সে কেমন ভাল আমাকে বড একটা তুচ্ছ মুচ্ছ কবে না।

তবু ভাল কেমন তোব ছাল্যা পিন্যাডাব সেবা স্নেহা কবে।

হাঁ তা বটে। আমাব ছাল্যা পিন্যা প্রাণ তাহাবি কাছে থাকে সে  
 তাহাবদিগকে খাওয়ায় ধোয়ায়।

আব আব মাগীবা দিন বাত কচ কচ ঝক ঝক কবিতোছেই তাহাব  
 কামাই নাই বাবণেব চিলু মত জলিতোছেই। সদা মাথামুড়া খাওয়া  
 আছেই।

ওবে কাহাব সাথে কাহাব প্রীতি নাই।

আর না প্রীতি কি ভাল মুখে আলাপ ও নাই কেবল মাথা মুড়া খাওয়া কাটা কাটা মাত্র ।

ভুলো তোর ভাৱের ফারে কেমন ভালবাসে তাহা বল তনি ।

আহা তার কথা কও কেন এখন আর আশারধের কি আশর আছে নুনের দিগে মন ব্যতিরেক পুরাতনের দিগে কে চাহে ।

তা হউক । তুই মকলের বড় শোর ছাড়া পিল্যা হইরাছে ।

কালি যে ভাই ছপুর বেলা কচকচি লাগালে মাগুরা বেটী তাল কি বলিব ।

কি অস্ত কচকচি হইল ।

দূর কর ভাই । তাহা কহিলে আর কি হবে নোকে তনিলে মন্দ বলিবে আশার বাকীভরা শত্রু এই অস্ত ভয় করি ।

বড় বৌ আশার মাথার দিল্লি সত্য করিরা বল ।

কালি ছপুর বেলা ছোট বৌ রাছিয়াছিল ইহার মধ্যে আশার ছালা আগে ভাত খাইরাছিল ইহার মধ্যে মাগুরানামী আসিরা কন্দল পারত করিণ ।

তোর গো বাকী নাইরাশুলা কেহ কার ভাল দেখিতে পারে না ।

কি করিব এমনত ঠাই নাই যে সেখানে গিরা দশ পাঁচ দিন থাকিলে গায় বাতাস লাগে ।

কেন তোর ভাইয়ের বাকী দিন কত বা না কেন ।

ভাইয়ের বাকী বাব কি তাহা হইলে তবে ভাইবাকীরদের কাছে রক্ষা আছে । আশার ভাইয়ের নাম তনিতে পারে না কেউ । কর্তা যিনি তিনি স্বন্দ ডাকাডাকির অস্ত বাকী আর থাকেন না যখন আইসেন তখন গালাগালি দিরাধার করেন ।

ভাইয়ের সংসারের এমনত ঐক্য ছিল এখন এমনত অনৈক্য হইরাছে ।

নাইরা ছটার বিবাহ দিতে পারিলে আমি নাটটা শরী গিরা ঘান করি কুলাই চণ্ডির আগে দড়ো স্তম্বাপান ২৭০নী পূজা করি মনকামনা সিদ্ধ করিলে হয় ।

মায়াব বিনাহেব কোথায় ঠাওব হইয়াছে দেশেব মধ্যে না  
বিদেশে দিবা।

ঈশ্ববেব মনে কি আছে বুঝিতে পাবি না আমাব ইচ্ছা দেশেব মধ্যে  
হইলে ভাল হয়।

তোমাব যাবা সকলে কি বলে মাইবাব মামা মামী কি বলে  
পাঁচটাব যে এত সেই কর্তব্য।

সে যে হুঁক। আমি বাড়ী যাই বেলা গেল এখন গালাগালি  
দিবে।<sup>1</sup>

This is indeed a fine piece but the *Women's Quarrels* are not so attractive Critics have found fault with Carey the missionary for giving these latter gross colloquies a place in his book which was intended to be a text-book for young civilian students but fastidious considerations apart, these dialogues certainly exhibit the true picture of a certain type or class in every society, interesting to the student of the drama, novel, or social history A strong tendency to objective realism in Carey demanded a *verbatim*

reproduction of the language of the people, had he listened to his missionary scruples, the picture, like Johnson's in *Rasselas*, would have

been unnatural or imperfect In this respect Carey has been called, not unwisely or too enthusiastically, the

spiritual father of Tek-chānd, and Dīnabandhu That Carey had fine dramatic instincts, which if developed would have borne better fruits, and

that he was more than a mere compiler, has been put beyond all doubts by the *Colloquies*

Its intense realism, both in its form and spirit

The significance of the book Carey of the *Dialogues* is the spiritual father of Tek chānd and Dīnabandhu

<sup>1</sup> *Dialogues*, 1st Ed pp 148 156, 3rd Ed pp 76 82

which to the student of Bengali is more than a mere treatise intended to facilitate the acquiring of the language

We have dwelt rather too long on Carey's *Dialogues* but the importance of the book in the light of subsequent history can never be ignored. With regard to the style and language of all these dialogues it should be noticed that here we have at the outset the first trace of the opposition between the plain and

The struggle between the plain and the ornate style first begun

the ornate styles in prose which is to dominate the rest of its history and reach to a crisis in the opposition of

the Alali style and the Sanserit College style' of the fifties. We shall have occasion to come back to this point hereafter but it is to be noted here that this perpetually recurring antinomy in the history of prose style was for the first time clearly posed and definitely worked out by Carey's simple colloquial prose on the one side and the elaborate diction of the Pandits especially of Mr̥tyuñjay on the other

The best example of a classic and simple style more dignified than the colloquial prose of the *Dialogues* more pure and correct than the prose of Rām Rām Basu or Chan̥i charan yet less affected than the ornate and laboured style of Mr̥tyuñjay is to be found in the *Itihās-mālā* of Carey

which chronologically however comes after almost all the important Bengali publications of the Fort William College except *Prabodh-chaṇḍikā* and *Purnā-parīkṣā*, and consequently had the advantage of having got more time for maturing in the meanwhile. It was printed and published in Śrināmpur in 1812 and as its name implies, it is a collection of stories in the Bengali language, collected

from various sources" The book contains 150 stories,<sup>1</sup> derived not only from books of fables and folk-love, eastern and western, but also from past literature, legends, and history There are, for instance, besides tales from *Hitopadeś* or *Pañcha-tantra*, the well-known story of Lahanā and Khullanā<sup>2</sup> as well as an anecdote of Akbar<sup>3</sup> The stories are very amusing and instructive, but the book consists mostly of translation and its interest chiefly lies in its simple homely prose style It is difficult to select a specimen for space would not allow us to quote more than one The following Specimen of its pure and simple style extract will be found interesting not only for its style but also for the touch of humour which is rather rare in these early works<sup>4</sup>

বিবাহ হইতে অবিবাস শত্রু যে প্রসিক আছে তাহাব কথা এই।

একজন ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণ অর্থাৎ বিবাহেব যোজক এক বনের মধ্য দিয়া আসিতেছিল সে স্থানে এক ব্যাঘ্র ঐ ঘটক ব্রাহ্মণকে মাঝে উদ্যত হইলে ব্রাহ্মণ ভীত হইয়া ক্রন্দন করিতে লাগিল। ব্যাঘ্র ঘটকেব ক্রন্দন দেখিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেক তুমি কি কাৰণ কান্দিতেছ ব্রাহ্মণ কহিলেক আমি ঘটক বিবাহেব যোজকতা করিয়া ধনোপার্জন করিয়া স্ত্রী পুত্র প্রভৃতিব ভরণপোষণ করি আমি মবিলে তাহাবা কোনমতে বাচিবেক না ইহা শুনিয়া ব্যাঘ্র বিবেচনা করিল আমি ব্যাঘ্রীহীন ব্রাহ্মণ বিবাহেব যোজকতা কবে পবে কহিলেক হে ঘটক তুমি আনাব বিবাহ দেও ব্যাঘ্রী না থাকাতো আমি বড় ছুখী আছি তুমি আনাব বিবাহ দিলে আমি তোমাকে নষ্ট করিব না। ব্রাহ্মণ ব্যাঘ্রেব

<sup>1</sup> Distributed over 320 pages

<sup>2</sup> *Itihā-mālā*, p. 210

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 311

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, story 16 pp. 37-40

বাক্য শ্রবণ করিয়া কহিলেক বিবাহ করা বড় কঠিন অর্থনা হইলে হয় না। ব্যাঘ্র কহিলেক আমি অর্থ দিতে পারি ব্যাঘ্র পূর্বে একজন লোক মারিয়াছিল তাহার অনেক অর্থ ছিল সে সেই সকল অর্থ ব্রাহ্মণের নিকটে উপহীত করিলে ব্রাহ্মণ অর্থ লইয়া কহিলেক এই অর্থতেই তোমার বিবাহ হইবেক কিন্তু বিবাহের পূর্ষ অধিবাস করিতে হইবেক সে বড় কঠিন। ব্যাঘ্র কহিলেক যদি আনার বিবাহ হয় তবে অধিবাস যে শস্ত তাহা আমি করিব। পরে ব্রাহ্মণ কহিল আমি গ্রামে গিয়া অধিবাসের সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিয়া আনি। ব্যাঘ্র ঘটককে অনেক অর্থ দিয়া বিবাহ করিলেক। ব্রাহ্মণ বাটী আসিয়া চর্মকাপের বাটী গিয়া এক চর্মের কল ঘর লটল বাহা। ব্যাঘ্র বকন হয় ও ঐ বনে লইয়া গেল ব্যাঘ্র সেই স্থানে বসিয়া আছে ব্রাহ্মণ কল গহিত ব্যাঘ্রের নিকটে গিয়া কহিল এই অধিবাসের সামগ্রী ইহাঙ্গ মন্যে আবেশ করিয়া চারি দণ্ড শয়ন করিতে হইবেক। ব্যাঘ্র বিবাহের আঙ্গানসে ঐ কলের মধ্যে শয়ন করিলেক। ব্রাহ্মণ কলের দ্বারা বকন করিয়া অনেকে একত্র হইয়া ঐ কল গহিত ব্যাঘ্রকে নদীতে ফেলাইয়া দিলেক। ব্যাঘ্র কলের সহিত নদীতে ডালিতে লাগিল ইতিমধ্যে এক ব্যাঘ্রী দেখিয়া ঐ চর্ম কল ঘরিলেক ভিত্তে চর্ম দত্তে ছিড়িয়া ফেলাইলেক। তখন ব্যাঘ্রের সহিত সাক্ষাৎ হইল ব্যাঘ্র ব্যাঘ্রীকে দেখিয়া বড় সন্তুষ্ট হইয়া উভয়ের মিলন হইল। ব্যাঘ্র ও ব্যাঘ্রী ঐ ব্রাহ্মণের বাটীতে গেল ব্রাহ্মণ দেখিয়া বড় ভীত হইল ব্যাঘ্র ব্রাহ্মণকে বড় ভীত দেখিয়া অনেক প্রকাব অতর বাক্য কহিল তুমি আমায় বিবাহের ঘটক আমি তোমাকে ছুই করিতে আনিরাছি এই কথা কহিয়া ব্রাহ্মণকে অনেক অর্থ দিয়া প্রণাম করিয়া সেই বনে গেল।

A more laborious and important publication was effected at a later date by Carey in his famous *Dictionary of the Bengalee Language* in two quarto volumes With hardly a model before him except Forster's *Vocabulary*



on Miller's *Dictionary*,<sup>1</sup> neither of which is hardly complete in itself, Carey achieved this useful and scholarly work after a labour of thirty years and it deserves all the praise that has been bestowed upon it. Though, like his *Grammar*, it hardly belongs to the province of literature pure or proper, this book did much in stimulating the cause of literature and fixing the forms and expressions of the language, and for a long time it continued to be the standard work on the subject. The first volume was published in 1815, but the typographical form adopted being found likely to extend the work to an inconvenient size, it was subsequently reprinted in 1818, a second volume in two parts appeared by 1825. These three volumes comprehend about 2,000 quarto pages and about 80,000 words<sup>2</sup>, a number that equally denotes the copiousness of the language and the industry of the compiler. Besides the meaning of words, their derivation is given where-ever ascertainable. This is almost always the case as a great many of the words included are Sanscrit or Sanscritic. Hallhed (*Grammar*, Preface p. xv) had long since maintained "the impossibility of learning the Bengali dialect without a general and comprehensive idea of the Sanscrit" on account of the close and intimate relation between the two. Following him, Carey himself always regarded Sanscrit as "the parent of nearly all the colloquial dialects of India"<sup>3</sup> and "the current medium of conversation amongst the Hindoos, until gradually corrupted by a number of local causes, so as to form the languages at

<sup>1</sup> Said to be published in 1801 (Long's *Catalogue*)

<sup>2</sup> Forster's *Vocabulary* contained only 18,000 words. Carey, however, acknowledges his indebtedness to Forster in the Preface to his *Dictionary*

<sup>3</sup> Preface to *Sanscrit Grammar*, 1806

present spoken in the various part of Hindoosthan and perhaps those of some of the neighbouring countries"<sup>1</sup> Carey therefore observes with regard to the materials of his *Dictionary* that considerably more than three fourth of the words are pure Sanskrit and those composing the greatest part of the remainder are so little corrupted that their origin may be traced without difficulty. He also states that he has endeavoured to introduce into the *Dictionary* every simple word used in the language and all the compound terms which are commonly current or which are to be found in the standard Bengali works. It may be thought indeed that in the latter respect he has been more scrupulous than it was absolutely necessary and has inserted compounds which might have been dispensed with their analysis being obvious and their elements being explained in their appropriate places. The *Dictionary* also includes many derivative terms and privative attributive and abstract nouns which though of legitimate construction may rarely occur in composition and are of palpable signification. The instances of such although they swell the dictionary into an inconvenient and costly bulk evince at the same time the compiler's careful research his conscientious exactitude and his unwearied industry. The English equivalents of the Bengali words are well-chosen and are of unquestionable accuracy<sup>2</sup>. Local terms are rendered with that correctness which Carey's knowledge of the manners of the people and his long domestication amongst them enabled him to attain and his scientific acquirements and familiarity with the subjects of natural history qualified him to employ and not unfrequently to

devise, characteristic denominations for the products of the animal and vegetable world peculiar to the East. The objection taken to this *Dictionary* on account of its bulk, was subsequently removed by the publication of an abridgement, prepared under Marshman's abridgement, 1827 Carey's own superintendence by J Marshman and printed in 1827<sup>1</sup>

Most of the compound and derivative terms were omitted and the publication was reduced to a thick octavo volume. Although this abridgement has the advantage of being more readily consulted, it does not however by any means obviate the necessity of the original which must be regarded as a standard work on the subject until replaced by a better one.

In order to make a final estimate of Carey's position in the history of modern Bengali literature it would be necessary to take into account other writers who flourished in this period and with respect to whom his position must be determined, yet it is hoped that a few words here would

Estimate of the labours and character of Carey as a writer of Bengali

not be out of place. It may be observed that Carey never claimed anything for himself save the credit of having worked zealously and assiduously. He said to his nephew Eustace his future biographer "If after my removal any one should think it worth while to write my life, I will give you a criterion by which you may judge of its correctness. If he give me credit of being a plodder he will describe me justly. Anything beyond this

His self-estimate, how far true

<sup>1</sup> This is in 2 vols. The first volume is an abridgement of the preceding *Dictionary* of Carey (Bengali English), the second is a *Dictionary*, English and Bengali, compiled by J C Marshman. 1st Ed, vol I, 1827 vol II, 1828, 4th Ed 1847

will be too much. I can plod. I can persevere in any definite pursuit. To this I owe everything'. There is indeed some truth in this self-estimate but the modesty of the scholar precludes him from ascertaining the true value of his life's work. A plodder he was but how very few can plod in the way he did and this self-derogatory epithet is not the last word to characterise his many-sided activity.

It cannot be denied at the outset that Carey had a clear vigorous intellect. he was a man of no ordinary powers of mind capable of strenuous and enduring application. many-sided his tastes were varied and his attainment vast. But even admitting all this it must be observed that he had no imagination no philosophic insight no splendid native endowments of any sort. Hardly any of his writings can be strictly called a work of genius. He

Whether he was a mere compiler and translator

modestly introduces himself in the Preface to his *Dialogues* as a mere compiler one who paves the way and leads the student to the higher classical works in the language. "The great want of books" says he to assist in acquiring this language which is current through an extent of country nearly equal to Great Britain which, when properly cultivated will be inferior to none in elegance and perspicuity has induced me to compile this small work and to undertake the publishing of two or three more, principally translations from the Sungakrit. These will form a regular series of books in the Bengalee gradually becoming more and more difficult till the student is introduced to the highest classical works in

the language" This was his main object in writing Bengali books he was never inspired by any literary enthusiasm or artistic impulse of creation His language and his interests are perfectly definite and practical, there is hardly any touch of elevation

Want of originality  
and creative power

or attempt at fine writing anywhere

That he was capable of better things,

is, as we have already pointed out, obvious from his

*Dialogues* yet even this work was meant chiefly as a text-book, and as such it hardly afforded many opportunities for the display of his inherent literary powers

Most of his other writings consists of translation or compilation But, although even in translation a capable

artist has scope for his originality, in Carey's case the translations may be suspected to be pretty closely copied

from the texts there is no native literary aspiration to be free and original Yet, after all is said, it must be

admitted that whatever talent could achieve without genius, Carey did accomplish If he wrote no great

imaginative work, he at least prepared the way for the writing of such We need not lament over the want of originality so conspicuous in his writings for in the special

circumstances it makes far more for his honour than for his depreciation His literary work was inspired not

by any desire of fame nor by any need of satisfying a peremptory

The value and significance of his translation

personal craving to write, but wholly

and solely by the wish of what he

thought to be benefitting the people, of doing something that might help the country out of the slough of decadence

into which it had been plunged by centuries of foreign rule, least favourable to the development of national

life or literature To this end, it would have been not merely presumptuous but, in the circumstances and the

time positively silly to have attempted original composition which was likely to be little read and little understood.

What then is his place? He had no originality as a worker in literature and no creative power. But he was a good reproducer of knowledge and as an educator of the nation his work and his influence were alike very great.

Discouraged by the authorities and under the Company liable to deportation he and his colleagues devoted themselves with courage to evangelisation and study of the vernacular. Of this we shall have occasion to speak more in detail but it is chiefly for this educational purpose as an indirect means of evangelisation that his books were written. They are all rudimentary no doubt but to them belongs the merit of first reducing to a system the chaotic colloquialism of the Bengali tongue. Knowing full well that the literature of a nation in the long run must be of indigenous growth he at once pressed into service Bengali scholars and writers. By his own exertions as well as by those of others which he instigated or superintended he left not only the students of the language well provided with elementary books but supplied standard compositions in prose for the native writers of Bengali and laid the foundation of a cultivated prose style and a flourishing literature throughout the country. It cannot indeed be said that Carey and his colleagues have raised Bengali to the rank of a literary dialect as the Jesuits of Madras are said to have done to the language of the South.<sup>1</sup> None

As a writer and a centre of influence.

Hunter *The Indian Empire* p. 304. In the same strain Smith the enthusiastic biographer of Carey says 'for the Bengali speaking race William Carey created a literary language a century ago' (*op cit* p. 180). *Vide ante* p. 81.

of the works of these missionaries is acknowledged to-day as classical by Bengali authors or Bengali readers, and Bengal had a language and literature of its own long before the missionaries even dreamt of coming out to this country, yet this language had decayed and the literature had been forgotten. It was at this time that Carey came to Bengal. In order to understand what he did for literature we must recollect in what state he had found it when he made the first start. There was hardly any printed book, manuscripts were rare, and all artistic impulse or literary tradition was almost extinct. To Carey

The character and  
object of his work

belongs the credit of having raised the language from its debased condition of an unsettled dialect to the character of a regular and permanent form of speech, capable, as in the past, of becoming the refined and comprehensive vehicle of a great literature in the future. Poetry there was enough in ancient literature, there was a rudiment of prose too, not widely known or cultivated. But Carey's was indeed one of the earliest attempts to write simple and regular prose for the expression of everyday thoughts of the nation. Other writers contemporaneous with him, like Rām Basu, or Mrtyuñjay took Persian or Sanscrit as their model and their prose in consequence became somewhat quaint, affected

Carey's prose

and elaborate, but the striking feature of Carey's prose is its simplicity. It is pervaded by a strong desire for clearness and for use, and by a love of the language itself. It succeeds in being clear and useful and it pleases by force of these elements. It is true that, in spite of all this, Carey must be admitted to have been in literature still a learner, not a master, in any sense, but we must not in our haste forget the pioneer who did the spade-work and paved the way for later glories. Such a pioneer Carey was, and eminently

fitted for this task he was by his acquirements as well as by his position

We have seen that Carey not only wrote in Bengali himself but with his influence in the Fort William College and reputation as a Bengali scholar

A friend of Bengali literature, and friend of Bengali writers he succeeded in inducing many learned

Bengalis to the promotion and preparation of good Bengali works With the aid of the Press at Śrīrāmpur and the collaboration of his colleagues and in subordination to its special purpose of multiplying copies

The Press at Śrīrāmpur and its encouragement of native talent. of the Bengali Bible he devoted himself to the printing as we shall see of the first efforts of native literary

talent From 1801 to 1825 many useful works in Bengali as well as in other languages<sup>1</sup> issued from the Mission Press at Śrīrāmpur to most of which Carey contributed encouragement and aid Many of the older Bengali classics were printed at the Mission and made accessible to the reading public. The editions of the *Ramāyaṇ* of Kṛtibāsa and the *Aṅgadamanṅgal* of Bhārat-chandra published through the zeal of Carey remained for a long time the standard texts

In the Appendix to the Tenth *Memoir* relative to Śrīrāmpur translations (1832) is given a review of the work of the Mission since its commencement. It is shown that two hundred and twelve thousand volumes in forty different languages at a cost of over £20,000 have been issued between 1801 and 1832. The Mission was practically the first in the field in its assiduous study of the different dialects and languages of India In the Sixth *Memo* (dated March, 1816) we find 34 specimens of 33 Indian languages given The whole discussion Grierson points out (*Indian Linguary* 1903, p. 246) is the first systematic survey of the languages of India. Before this, Gilchrist in his *Oriental Fœderist* (1806) had attempted to give a polyglot version of *Æsop's fables* but he confined himself to giving specimens only in six languages including the classical Sanscrit and Arabic.



of these ancient works The promotion of Bengali literature thus effected by the example and impulse of the Press of Śrīrāmpur had been very important, although after 1825 it became less necessary because of numerous printing presses springing up in Calcutta for the promotion of indigenous talent But this alteration of the state of things after 1825 is itself due mainly to the example and influence of Carey and the missionaries at Śrīrāmpur

Nothing would be more fitting to close this perfunctory estimate of Carey and his works than the high tribute paid to Carey by a competent authority, the celebrated lexicographer and scholar, Rām Kamal

The tribute of Rām Sen "I must acknowledge here"  
Kamal Sen

he says in the Preface to his *Bengali-English Dictionary* (1830), "that whatever has been done towards the revival of the Bengali language, its improvement, and in fact, the establishment of it as a language, must be attributed to that excellent man, Dr Carey, and his colleagues, by whose liberality and great exertions, many works have been carried through the press, and the general tone of the language of this province has been so greatly raised "

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PUNDITS AND MUNSHIS OF THE FORT WILLIAM COLLEGE

After William Carey the next writer of importance who composed two of the earliest original works in Bengali prose was Rām Rām Basu who unlike Carey was a native of Bengal born at Chinsurah towards the end of the 18th century and educated at the village of Nimteb in the 24 Pergunnahs. He was a Baṅgaja Kāyastha, as is indicated in his *Pratāpāditya Charitra*. To quote Dr Carey's account 'Ram Bose before he attained his sixteenth year became a perfect master of Persian and Arabic. His knowledge of Sanskrit was not less worthy of note. Such was his reputation for proficiency in these languages that Carey speaks of him admiringly a more devout scholar than him I did never see'. It was this reputation for learning which secured to him not only the post of a Pandit in the College of Fort William

*Original Papers of Carey & the care of Serampore Missionary Library* quoted in N. Rāy's *Pratāpāditya Charitra* p. 185

\* Buchanan, *op. cit.* speaks of him as "a learned native"; Marshman, *op. cit.* describes him as "one of the most accomplished Bengali scholars of the day".

\* Carey says that Rām Basu resigned his appointment through a difference of opinion with the authorities of the College. The date of his resignation however cannot be determined. In Roebuck, *op. cit.* (which was published in 1819) we do not find Rām Basu's name in the list of the Bengali Pandits; on the other hand in Buchanan, *op. cit.* (published 1805) he is described as "a learned native in the College. He must have resigned some where between 1805 and 1818.

in 1801 but also the friendship of Rājā Rām-mohan Rāy, himself a learned man, who is said by Carey to have exercised great influence on Rām

Influence of Rām  
Mohan Rāy

Basu's life and character and mould-  
ed his literary aspirations It should

be noted here that Rām-mohan, according to some, was the author of the first original prose treatise in Bengali, because his Bengali work on Monotheism ( হিন্দুগণের পৌত্তলিকতাব প্রতিবাদ ) was, according to himself, written when he was only sixteen, and supposing him to be born in 1774, or even, according to others, as late as 1780, the book must have been written before any of the publications of the Fort William College or of the Śīrāmpur Press issued But this book meant for private circulation was never printed or published, and Rām-mohan's earliest publication in Bengali was in 1815

Rām Basu's posi-  
tion as the earliest  
original writer of  
Bengali prose

It seems therefore that Rām Basu's  
position as the first native original  
writer in modern Bengali prose still,  
after all, remains unassailable But

the influence of Rām-mohan's unpublished work, which Rām Basu is said to have taken as his model, can never be disputed, and it was from the learned Rājā that Rām Basu got the first impulse to write in Bengali Carey reports to have heard that Rām Rām took the manuscripts of his first work, *Pratāpāditya Charitra* to Rām-mohan, and got it thoroughly revised by him <sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Rām Basu's *Attack on Brahmins* (called simply *on Brahmins* in Murdoch, *Catalogue*) as well as his other writings show that he shared many of his views with his friend and master, Rām-mohan In *Bāṅgālā Sāmayik Sāhitya* (1917), vol 1 p 25, this work of Rām Basu on Brahmins is called ব্রাহ্মণের বিরুদ্ধে and the date given is 1801 Speaking of this work, Marshman *op cit* says that in it "he exposed the absurdities of Hinduism and the pretension of its priest-hood with great severity" and pays him the compliment of

Although the influence of the Rājā was so great on him, Rām Basu was at the same time a great friend of the Missionaries consorted for many years with Thomas, and was for some time Carey's Munsi.

From whatever source the impetus might have come, Rām Basu wrote two important original works in Bengali under the patronage of the Fort William College—

1 *Rājā Pratāpāditya Charitra* 1801 July

2 *Imāmāla* 1802

*Pratāpāditya Charitra* 2 is said to be the first prose work and the first historical one that appeared (Longe Catalogue) Its claim to be considered as

having wielded the power of sarcasm inherent in the language with singular effect." He was almost on the verge of avowing Christianity (See Calross op cit pp. 61-62) but was possibly deterred by Rām Mohan. Rām Rām Basu is said to have written also a book called *বীৰ চরিত্র* i 1801 or the *Immortal History of Christ in Verse* 12 mo. 23 pp Murdoch Catalogue how or dates it at bout 1810.

This work like *Kṛṣṇachandra Rāyer Charitra* was written at the inducement of Dr Carey. Rām Rām Basu helped Carey in his translation of the Bible (see footnote to p 113 See also *Calcutta Review* vol. x. p. 124) Rām Basu wrote besides the works mentioned above a Christian tract called the *Gospel Messenger* which is also mentioned by Long. The description of this tract is thus given in Murdoch, Catalogue; "Three months later (i.e. June 1800) a Tract was printed under the title of the 'Gospel Messenger' which was written 'to usher in the Bible. This little book contained a hundred lines in Bengali verse. The writer Rām Rām Basu, had been convinced of the truth of Christianity through the instruction of Mr Thomas. 'The Gospel Messenger' was the first thoroughly native tract printed in Bengali" (op cit. p 4-5) See also Smith op. cit p 203; Marshman, *Hist of Seramp. Miss* pp. 131 132

The title-page says: *বীৰ চরিত্র*। *বীৰ* বাস কহিলেন  
বন্দনের বৃন্দ। এককর বাসনের অংশে। *বীৰ* বাস বন্দন করিত। *বীৰ* বাস

the first piece of original prose work we have briefly discussed. As an historical work, too, its place is very high. In the description of it given in Buchanan's *College of Fort William* (1805), it is said to have been "composed from authentic documents" and Rām Basu himself at the beginning of his book says সংপ্রতি সর্কাবত্তে এ দেশে প্রতাপাদিত্য নামে এক রাজা হইরাছিলেন তাহাব

As the first historical work in Bengali prose

বিবরণ কিঞ্চিত্ত পাবন্য ভাবায় গ্রন্থিও আছে  
সাম্প্রদায়িকপে সামুদায়িক নাহি আমি  
তাহাবদিগেব স্বশ্রেণী একেই ভাতি ইহাতে  
তাহাব আপনাব পিতৃপিতানহেব স্থানে শুনা আছে অতএব  
আমবা অধিক জ্ঞাত এবং আব আব অনেকে মহাবাজাব  
উপাখ্যান আনুপূর্বক জানিতে আকিঞ্চন কবিলেন এ জন্য বেনত  
আমাব শ্রুত আছে তদনুযায়ি লেখা বাইতেছে।<sup>1</sup> It  
seems therefore that this work—one of the very few  
treatises on a little-known period of history, is based  
upon both authentic history and tradition, but the  
learned pundit seems to have taken every precaution to

ছাপা হইল। ১৮০১। *The History of Raja Pratapaditya By Ram Ram Boshoo one of Pundits in the College of Fort William Serampore* Printed at the Mission Press 1802 pp 1 156 Entered with identical date, place of publication and name of the author in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon East India Company* 1845, p 195 An excellent edition of this work, which had been out of print since the first edition in 1801, has been brought out by Nikhilmāth Rāy under the auspices of the Sūhitya Parishat. It is needless to say that I am much indebted for some biographical and other informations to this edition, but with regard to the extracts quoted, I have carefully compared the text given here with that in the first edition, as I find it in the copy of the work lent to me by the Library of the Board of Examiners. The references are given to both the original as well as to N Rāy's edition as the latter is more easily procurable. The page reference given here in the text is, in the first place, to the 1st edition (Library of Board of Examiners) and then to N Rāy's edition.

<sup>1</sup> রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যচরিত, pp 34, p 1



and interesting manner, enlivened by visual pictures descriptions, and anecdotes, and Rām Basu's power of representing historical incidents, without being dry or discursive, is undoubted. As a pioneer in the field this is a high compliment indeed. His is the plain narrative style, suited to his work, with little embellishments (except by way of gorgeous descriptions) or suggestiveness, but marked with a certain interesting idiosyncrasy of character in spirit and form.

Rām Basu as an  
historian

It is not possible to give too many extracts but the following, it is hoped, will illustrate his general manner and powers of description.

An illustrative  
extract (The flight of  
Rām chandra)

এ দিগে ক্রমে ক্রমে কেদার ব্যগ্র প্রভৃতি ভূইয়াবদিগকে নিপাত কবিত্তা তাহাবদেব বাজ্য লইল। আপন তবকেব লোক সৰ্ব্বত্র নিবৃত্ত কবিত্তা বাজ্য বাজ্যেব খাজনা আদায়তে প্রবর্ত্ত। তাহাবদেব মধ্যে কেবল বাজ্য বামচন্দ্র বাকলাওখালা ভূইয়া তাহাব বাজ্য কবজ কবিল এবং সে পলায়ন কবিত্তা দেশান্তরি হইল। তাহাব বিবরণ এই।

বামচন্দ্র প্রতাপাদিত্যেব জামাতা তাহাব অধিকাবেব উপবচাই না কবিত্তা ঠাওবাই কোন কোশলে দেশ কবজ কবে তাহা কবিল একটা প্রবন্ধে নিমন্ত্রণ দিয়া তাহাকে আনাইল ধুনখাট নিজ পূর্বীৰ মধ্যে তাহাতে খাতিবজনার থাকিল ভাবিল এখন কাবুব তলে থাকিলেন আবগুক হইলে ইহাকে সংহাব কবণেব আটক হবেক না আব আব কেদার ব্যগ্র প্রভৃতি সমস্তকেই নিপাত কবিত্তা তাহাব অধিকাব আপন লোক দিত্তা শাসন কবিলেন।

(*vide postea* p 171) W. Pertsch, the editor of *Kṛṣṇa's Bamsāvalī Chāritam* (Berlin 1852) alluded to this work but its scarcity even in his day made it difficult for him to obtain a copy and he contents himself by the account of it given in the *Calcutta Review*, xiii 1850, p 135

ইতিমধ্যে সামচন্দ্র ব্যতীবেক আর আর সমস্তই কমতল প্রতাপাদিত্য ঠান্ডারাইলেন এখন সামচন্দ্রের রাজ্যে কবজকরণের আটক হইতে পারে না। রাজ্য অধ্যাপ্তি লোকে বলিবেক প্রাণান্তের অবিকার কাড়িয়া লইল ইহা না করিয়া যদি উহাকে শুণ্ডে সংহার করিয়া মুখ্যের সমাচার নক্ষত্রের দ্বারা লোকাচার করিলে সম্ভাব্য রাজ্য কবজকরণে অধ্যাপ্তি হইবেক না। অতএব সেই কর্তব্য।

এই রচনা করিয়া হুকুম হইল অতাই কোন ক্রমে শুণ্ডে সংহার করহ তাহাকে। বিবেচনা এই হইল। প্রান্তে যখন গাঞিধান করিয়া বাহিরে যাবে সেই কালে নান্য ক্রমে শুণ্ডে তাহার শিরচ্ছেদন করে।

এই কথা পরামর্শ হইলে অস্ত্রধারি লোক স্থানে স্থানে নিয়োজিত হইল। এ সকল কথা পর ১৪ পূরী মধ্যে প্রচার হইলে রাজকন্তা শুনিয়া উৎকণ্ঠিত দিবাংশে বামীর সোচয় করিতে পারেন না। এইরূপ চিন্তাতে দিবাপ্রহর হইলে নান্যক্রমে বামীকে এ সকল গুণ্ডিত তত্ত্বতে নিবেদন করিলেন। রাজ আমাত্য এ সকল শুনিয়া বিষরাগত হইলেন এবং যথোচিত ক্ষম ভাবিলেন কি ক্রমে এখান হইতে নির্গত হইতে পারা যায়। রাজকন্তা কহেন উপায় কিছু দেখি না ঈশ্বর বুঝি আশ্রয় বৈধব্য দয়া করিলেন।

রাজ বিভ্রম চিত্তিরা কহিলেন তোমার স্নাতা ঈশ্বরাদিত্যের নহিত আশ্রয় যথেষ্ট প্রণয় তুমি তাহাকে এ স্থানে আনিতে পারিলে যদি তাহা হইতে ইহার কোন উপায় হয়। রাজকন্তা বামী আশ্রয়প্রার্থে স্নাতা নিকট গমন করিয়া আগুন বামীর স্থানে শুণ্ডে আনয়ন করিলেন রাজ নবিনয়েতে বেগুয়া বিদিত করিলে রাজকুমার চিন্তিত হইয়া কহিলেন ইহার আর উপায় কিছু দেখিতেছি না। কেবল একটা সুগতিক হইরাছে।

অত এই রাজ্যে গুপ্তপিতামহের বাটীতে নাচ সেবিবার অঙ্গপ্রোথ আছে তাহাতে আমার বাগুয়া আব্রক ইহাতে যদি তুমি কিছু কষ্টের কর্মে পড় হইতে পারহ তবে আমি এ সঙ্কট হইতে মুক্তা করিতে



পাবি। বাঘ হইয়া কহিলেন বহু কি কঠিন কার্য্য অশ্ব আনি যে  
বিপদগ্রস্ত যে কোন বর্গে আমার উপকার দর্শে তাহাতেই আনি শত।  
বাজপুত্র কহিলেন তোমার পালকি কান্দে লইতে হবে না কিন্তু তুমি গতি  
কব আমার অঞ্চলে পবিচ্ছেদানিও হও আমার মশালটিও পবিচ্ছেদে।  
তবে দেবতা যাহা কখন।

বায় প্রাণেব বঙ্গার্থে বাজকুমারের মতাবলম্বি হইয়া সঙমাবিব  
সমিভ্যাবে মশাল ধবিয়া প্রস্থান কবিলেন এই এই এতে এ ভগ্ন  
হইতে পবিভাগ হইয়া অতিভ্রত আপন আগত্য সমুদয় নৌকা আবোহিবা  
ঐ বাএ খোস্তা কাটিব নালা মুখল কবিয়া মবিচাপ নদিতে নৌকা দিলে  
প্রফুল্ল হইয়া এককালিন তোব ও বন্দকেব দেহড ও নাকাবা ইত্যাদিতে  
ডকা দিলে শব্দানুসাবে বাজা প্রতাপাদিত্যে চৈতন্য পাইয়া প্রহরিব  
দিগকে জিজ্ঞাসা কবিলেন কি শব্দ শুনা যাব। তর্ক কব। বুঝি  
বানচন্দ্র প্রস্থান কবিল।<sup>1</sup>

In addition to its being the first piece of history in Bengali, the work has an intrinsic interest of its own to the student of literature. The curious style, in which it is written, with its quaintness, its crude orthography and syntax and its tendency towards Persian, has been the subject of much adverse criticism, but considered in the light of literary history it reveals to us certain aspects of the development of prose style in the beginning of the last century. The writer<sup>2</sup> in the *Calcutta Review* of 1850

characterises this style as a "kind of mosaic, half Persian, half Bengali" indicating "the pernicious influence which the Mahamadans had exercised over the Sanskrit-derived languages of India" and this view has been endorsed by J Long who in his *Descriptive Catalogue*

<sup>1</sup> রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য চরিত্র, pp 130-35 pp 54-56,

<sup>2</sup> The writer was James Long himself. See *Cal Rev* 1850, p 134, Art "Early Bengali Literature and Newspapers".

(1855) speaks of the book as a work the style of which a kind of mosaic, shewed how much unjust ascendancy of the Persian language had in that day corrupted the Bengali' Mahāmahopādhyāy Haraprasād Śāstri in one of his lectures 'condemned the book as 'unreadable on account of its style. It can not be denied indeed that the style is a kind of mosaic—a curious admixture of Bengali and Persian—quaint affected and involved and considered from the standpoint of purity lucidity or simplicity its style is the worst that this period has to show in Bengali prose. It is true that Persian words occur more or less in every writing of this period and we have seen from Carey's *Dialogues* published only a month

after the book under review Persian

Preponderance of  
Persian

words preponderated especially in the colloquial language of a certain class

of people but no other publication of this period is so much disfigured by Persian and Urdu words as Rām Basu's *Pratapaśītya Charitra*. The following extracts taken at random will bear out the above statement

বেকালে দিগ্নির  
তক্ষে হোমাত্ বাসসাহ তখন হোলেমান ছিলেন কেবল বঙ্গ ও বেহারের  
মবাব পরে হোমাত্ বাসসাহের ওকাত হইলে হেনোতানে বাসসাহ  
হইতে ব্যাধ হইল এ কারণ হোমাত্ ছিলেন বৃহত সোমী তাহার অনেক  
গুলি (গুলিন) মতান তাহারদের আশনারদের মধ্যে আশ্রকল হইয়া  
বিতর বিতর বকড়া লকাই কাজিরা উপস্থিত ছিল ইহাতে সুবাসাতের

*Lectures on Bengali Literature in the Present Century* (in Bengali) at the Babitri Library (Published in Bagdadashan, vol. vii and viii, 1287-88 B S) He uses the words অগাধ কবীর in connexion with this work, which appellations, however are rather too strong. It is a significant fact that D. Yates in his *Selection from Bengali Literature of this period* (*Introduction to the Bengali Language* 1847 vol. II) does not quote a single extract from *Pratapaśītya Charitra*, for its style seems to have been regarded as not worth study or attention.

তংশিল তাগান্না দিছু হইয়াছিল না (p 6-7 , p 2)। সে স্থানে নোব পাঠাইয়া দবোবস্ত জন্মল কাটাইয়েন ও নদী নালার উপর স্থানে স্থানে পুলবন্দি কবিতা বাস্তা নন্দ কবিলেন চতুঃপার্শ্বে গোলাগঞ্জ সহর বাদ্যাব নগর চাতব ও বাগ বাগিচা (p 18 , p 7)। পাচ লং নান্দ দিল্লি গেদে' ছিল সনস্ত আনয়ন কবিতা চন্দ্র হইল গোড়ে চতাই কবিত্তে ও দাউদেব শিবচ্ছেদন কবিত্তে (p 22 , p 4)। তোডবনল এই সনস্ত দেখিয়া নিবোপায়কনে বিনশ' হইয়া হজুব এংলা বাবল বেওবা পুণ্ডবে আবহ-দাপ্ত কবিলে বাদসাহ মহাবোষান্নিত সেনাতে সাজনিবোবল ডঙ্কা দিতে হকুন কবিলেন (p 22 , p 9)। দাউদ আপনাব দবোবস্ত সেনাগল উত্তর পশ্চিম ভাগে পাঠাইয়া স্থানে স্থানে খুবচাবন্দি কবিতা সতৎ সাবধানে বহিয়াছে (p. 21 , p 8)। এখায় বাদনাহি লক্ষব সেনাপতি বাজা তোডবনল ও বাজা ওমবাও সিংহ এই দুই সেনাপতি সর্বসৈন্য লইয়া দাউদেব থানা বখানায় বজ্রিত হইয়া বেগগতি পুট ফশাদ কবিত্তে সর্বত্র জয়ী হইয়া বাজমহলেব কেল্লাতে দাখিল হইলেন (pp 28-29 , p 11)। শুবা জাতেব কাগজজাতও কিছু পাইলেন না যে তাহাতে এ তিন শুবাব উল্লল তংশিল প্লাব তংশিল ওয়াকিফ হএন (p 29 , p 12)। ইহাতে দুই ভ্রাতা খাতিব জনা হইয়া গেল বাজাবদেব সতিং ও নজব দিয়া সাখ্যাত কবিলে তাহাবা বিস্তব সম্মান কবিল দুই ভ্রাতাকে খেলাত দিয়া খাতিবদারিতে সে দিবস বাসায বিদায় কবিল তাহাবদিগকে (pp 32-32 , p 13)। তৎপবে প্রতাপাদিত্য যাইয়া চতুর্থমাসে দিল্লিতে পৌছিলা উকিলেবা পূর্বে সনাচাব পাইয়া দিব্য এক অট্টালিকা মেবামত কবিতা বাখিয়াছিল তাহাতে বাসা হইল কএকদিন পবে বিস্তব বিস্তব তংশা আদি দিয়া বাদসাহেব হজুবে দবপেষ হইলেন (p 60 , p 25)

It must be borne in mind, however, that at the time when the first Bengali prose works were written, Persian and Urdu, as the languages of the Court<sup>1</sup> and the market-place, were extensively studied and works

1. It was abolished as a Court language in 1836

in those languages were taken as models of composition

How far justifiable in Bengali Sanscrit was chiefly confined to the exclusive class of learned Brāhmins and curious scholars. Not only Persian and Urdu were learnt by the boys at school together with their mother tongue but even in ordinary conversation Persian words were extensively used. Six centuries of Mohammedan rule did not affect in any remarkable degree the manners and customs of the people but they succeeded in throwing the vernacular into the shade and strengthening the supreme authority of Persian and Arabic from whose rich vocabulary the Bengali language had been borrowing ever since. Even up to the time of Rām Mohan when the tendency to Sanscritised style was gradually growing into favour the Persian ideal was not wholly discarded. Rām Mohan himself wrote his earliest work in Persian but he was also a profound scholar of Sanscrit and his later Bengali style was therefore more

Sanscritised. Rām Basu however in spite of Carey's tribute to his knowledge of Sanscrit seems never to have possessed that command over

Rām Basu's mastery over Persian and adherence to Persian originals the language which his friend Rām Mohan certainly did. But Rām Basu's mastery over Persian and Arabic, which seem to have been his favourite subjects was undoubted. Moreover Rām Basu as we have pointed out distinctly says at the beginning of his book that he has based his work upon certain historical treatises in Persian. It may be observed that in the description of wars and court affairs the language of the day could not avoid a certain inevitable admixture of Persian. Rām Mohan's subject matter was religion, and his text the Sanscrit Śāstras; while Rām Basu's interest on the other hand, was in history and the Persian manuscripts

constituted his authorities. As a result, therefore, it was quite natural that in his composition, Persian should have so much influence. Towards the end of *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, however, and in the description of domestic or emotional matters, Rām Basu has avoided foreign aid and turned naturally to Sanscriticised language in order to attain more vernacular ease. In the following passage on the celebrated episode of Basanta Rāy's murder as well as the description of the flight of Rām-chandra quoted above, it will be seen that the number of Persian words are comparatively few.

রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য কোনক্রমে হননেব ছিদ্ৰ পায় না বাজা বসন্ত  
 মায়েব পিতাব সায়ৎসবিক শ্রাদ্ধেব দিবসে অবাবিতদাব পূর্ক্সাপন্ন  
 থাকে ইত্যাপকাসে রাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য এক দিব্য তলোয়ার নন্দোপনে  
 লইয়া যশহর পূবী প্রবেশ কবিলে দেখে বাজা বসন্ত বায় নান কমিতেছেন  
 ইহাতে বেগে গতি কবিয়া আইসেন। এই সনয়ে খানসান্না বলিল  
 রাজাকে মহাবাজ বাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য বেগে আসিতেছেন। ইহাতে  
 তিনি এস্ত হইয়া বলিলেন গঙ্গাজল আন। তাহাবর্থ গঙ্গাজল নাম  
 তলোয়ার। খানসান্না তাহা না বুঝিয়া এক বাটীতে কবিয়া গঙ্গাজল  
 উপস্থিত কবিল ইহা দেখিয়া বুঝিলেন পবনাখু এই পর্য্যন্ত। ইতিমধ্যে  
 বাজা প্রতাপাদিত্য অতিবেগে নিকটস্থ হইয়া তাহাব শিবচ্ছেদন কবিলে  
 মুণ্ড ভূমিতলে পতন হইল ইহাতে অতিশয় কলবব ও হাহাকার শব্দ  
 হইল। (pp 137-38, pp 57-58)

Moreover, *Pratāpāditya-charitra* was the first attempt at sustained Bengali prose-writing, and with no model before him, Rām Basu had no other alternative than that of writing in the current language, which was in itself a strange admixture of Bengali and Persian, in order that his work might easily appeal to all. What seems quaint and affected to us was quite natural to readers a

Corruption of the  
popular language

century ago who were accustomed to such corrupted forms. We must make allowance for all these considerations; but after all is said it cannot be denied at least that the style of *Pratapāditya* is one of the worst specimens of Bengali prose-writing even for this period.<sup>1</sup>

In *Lipimālā* however his next work<sup>2</sup> published in 1802 consisting of a collection of letters on various topics, the influence of Persian is almost absent. The Preface to this work in Bengali indicating its object and plan will be found interesting—

*Lipimālā*, 1802

স্মৃতি স্থিতি প্রণয়কর্তা জ্ঞানেশ সিদ্ধিদাতা পরব্রহ্মের<sup>৩</sup> উদ্ভিজে নত  
হইয়া প্রণাম ও আর্চনা করিয়া নিবেদন করা

Its object and plan  
as explained in the  
Preface.

বাহিতেছে।—

এ হেন্দুধর্মি মধ্যস্থল বঙ্গদেশ কার্যক্রমে  
এ সময় অন্যান্য দেশের ও উপরীষ্টীয় ও পর্তত্ব জীবিত লোক উত্তম  
মধ্যম অধম অনেক লোকের সমাগম হইরাছে এবং অনেক অনেকের  
অবস্থিতি ও এইখানে এখন প্রব্রুণের অধিষ্ঠিতি ইংলণ্ডীয় মহাপ্রেরণা  
তাহারা এদেশের চলনভাবা অবগত নহিলে রাজক্রিয়াকর্ম হইতে পারেন

This work was re-written in a more popular style by Harish chandra Tarkalabdkār at the instance of Rev James Long in 1853 and included in the Bengali Family Library Series (বার্হিষ বালালা (১৩৭৭)) 2nd Edition 1856. It would be interesting to contrast the styles of these two works written at the interval of 50 years. Harish chandra's version is reprinted in N Rāy's edition.

The book gives a clue to its date. There is a couplet in the Preface which shows that it was composed in ১২১৮ It runs thus,—নত(১২১৮) বহু বর্ষ শু প্রেই হাস। হর আম্রের হার করিল প্রকাশ।

This undoubtedly shows according to some critics the influence of Rām mohan Rāy who taught the worship of "ব্রহ্ম" This influence is also indicated in the present work by its more Sanscriticised style

না ইহাতে তাহাবদিগেব আকিঞ্চন এখানকাব চলন ভাষা ও লেখাপড়াব ধাৰা অভ্যাস কবিসা সৰ্ববিধ কাৰ্যক্ষমতাপন্ন হয়েন। এতদৰ্থে এ ভূমীয় যাবদীয় লেখাপড়াব প্রকবণ দুই ধাৰাতে গ্রহিত কবিসা লিপিমাল্য নাম পুস্তক বচনা কবা গেল। প্রথম ধাৰা দুই তিন অধ্যায় তাহাব প্রথমতো বাজাগণ অন্য বাজাবদিগকে লেখেন তাহাব প্রত্যুত্তবপূৰ্বক দ্বিতীয় বাজাগণ আপন সচিবলোককে অমুজ্ঞা ও বিধিব্যবহাৰমদান। ইতি প্রথমধাৰা। দ্বিতীয় ধাৰা সামান্য লেখাপড়া। সমান সমালীকে শুদ্ধ লখুকে এবং গম্ভু শুককে প্রভু কৰ্মকবকে এবং অকমাল্য এইমতে পুস্তক লেখা যাইতেছে। ইহাতে অন্যান্য বিধান লোকেব স্থানে আমাৰ এই আকাঙ্ক্ষা যে বদি আমাৰ বচিত এই পুস্তকেব মধ্যে কদাচিতক্ৰমে কশ্চিত দোষ হইয়া থাকে তাহা অমুগ্রহপূৰ্বক দৃষ্টিমাণে নিন্দামদে মণ্ড না হয়েন এ কাবণ কোন লোক দোষ ভিন্ন হইতে পাবে না।<sup>1</sup>

The letters, however, are not all on business matters  
 Description of the book or domestic subjects but some of  
 them are in reality discourses on some  
 religious, historical or legendary topics of interest For  
 instance, in the letter of one King to another we have,  
 among other things, a discourse on the death of Parikshit  
 with a moral on the impotence of human will, in the  
 letter of a King to his subject, an account of Dakṣa-yajña

<sup>1</sup> লিপিমাল্য পুস্তক। রামবাস বহুর রচিত। শ্রীবাসপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮০২।  
*Lippimala or the Bracelet of Writing being a Series of Letters on  
 Different Subjects by Ram Ram Boshoo, one of the Pundits in the  
 College of Fort William Serampore 1802 pp 1 255 Also entered in the  
 Catalogue of the Library of the Hon East India Company, p 295, with  
 identical date and place of publication and name of the author In  
 Buchanan op cit it is described as "an original composition in Bengali  
 prose in the epistolary form" and in *Primitiae Orientales* as "Letters on  
 business in the Bengali Language intended to facilitate transactions  
 with the natives"*

a son writing to his father gives a description of Nabadwip and Chaitanya a father instructs his son

An original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form in the Paurāṇik account of Nārada and Parbat or of the descent of Bhāgīrathī a teacher writing to his

pupil answers some of the latter's questions about Rābāṇ and the legendary account of Baidyanāth This work is really, as Buchanan describes it (*op cit* p 228) an original composition in Bengali prose in the epistolary form' All these descriptive letters are indeed interesting both in form and matter but it is not possible to give here more than one quotation on account of the length of the letters —

স্বামী চাকরকে ।<sup>১</sup>

অথ বিবরণক বিশেষ তোমার ও অকালের মধ্যে মহাশীঠ জ্ঞানাম্ব

Illustrative extracts

(1) A description of Dakṣ and his Sacrifice.

যে অতি চমতকৃত স্থান তনিলান সেধানকার

সেবাদি এখন পূর্ণদত্ত হয় না তোমার বড়

একটা মনোযোগ সে বিষয় প্রতি নাই এ বড়ই

বিবন্ধ কথা আমি বুঝি তুমি তাহাতে

জ্ঞাত নহ অতএব সে বিবরণ লেখিতেছি মনোযোগ করিবা।

মহাদেব বিবাহ করেন দক্ষের চহিতা মহাশক্তি অবতীর্ণা দক্ষের

গৃহে তাহার নাম সতী। দক্ষ মহাব্যক্তি প্রজাপতি এম্মার মানসপুত্র

শব (শিব) তাহার বামাতা বটে কিন্তু ইনি অনাদি কত কোটি ব্রহ্মা

ইহার আজ্ঞাবৎ তাহাতে দক্ষ কোন ব্যক্তি তাহার পূর্জসাম্বান্ধবে

মহাশক্তি ভগবতী তাহার কঙ্কারূপে অবতীর্ণা হইলেন সেই কথা

মহাশক্তি তিনি মহাদেবের শক্তি। মহাদেব দক্ষকে স্বত্তরভায়ে প্রণাম

করেন না ইহাতেই দক্ষ মহাদেবের প্রতি আনন্দিত কখন নহেন বরং

কোপিত (কুপিত) এবং কখন কুৎসা বাক্য মহাদেবের বিপরীতে করেন।

লিপিবান, প্রথম খণ্ড; pp 107 110 Some verses are here omitted at the beginning



এই ৭৩ কতক কাল গত হয়। এক সময় ভৃগু মহামুনি একে ত্রিভুবন নিমন্ত্রণ হইলে সমস্ত দেবগণের আগমন দক্ষ প্রজাপতি ইত্যাদি সমস্তই সভায় এইকালে মহাদেবের আগমনে সবনেই উত্থান কবিত্তা অভ্যর্থনা কবিলে প্রজাপতি দক্ষ অহদ্যে অহরুত হইয়া মহাদেবের প্রণাম না করাতে উত্থান কবিলেন না এবং আলাপও না কবিত্তা অন্য লোকেব সহিত শিবনিন্দায় প্রবর্ত সেই হইতে দক্ষের দেব বিদ্বেষ এবং শিবনিন্দা সদা পবে দক্ষ মহাকোপে নিজালয় বাইয়া আপনি বজ্রাবস্ত কবিলেন বিবেচনা এই যে আমার বজ্রে মহাদেবের নিমন্ত্রণ কবিত্ত না হইতেই তাহাব অপমান হইবেক এই ৭৩ে বজ্রাবস্ত কবিত্তা সমস্ত আহ্বান কবিলেন মহাদেব তাহাব বামাতা তাহাব কন্যা মহাশক্তি সতী শিবের ঘবনী তথাচ তাহাব প্রতি দৃষ্টি না কবিত্তা বোষণুতে সমস্তই বিস্মৃতি কন্যা কি যামাতা কাহাকেও নিমন্ত্রণ কবিলেন না। এই মতে দক্ষের বজ্র হইতেছে ইতিমধ্যে সতী পিতৃগৃহে উৎসব শুনিয়া উৎকণ্ঠ চিত্ত হইয়া অত্যন্ত কাতবা সতী নিবেদন কবিত্তেছেন মহাদেব প্রভো পিতৃগৃহে মহোৎসব আমার চিত্ত একান্ত ব্যাকুল হইয়াছে পিতৃগৃহে বাইতে ইচ্ছা দেখ প্রাণনাথ চিবকাল গত হইল মঙ্গল স্থল কবে তোমাব ঘবে আমিরাছি পরে কখন পিতৃগৃহে যাই নাই এবং মাতাপিতাকে দেখি নাই আমি আমার মাতাব কন্যা মাতা আমাকে বড় ভাল বাসেন আমিও সেই মত আমার ইচ্ছা পিতৃগৃহে যাইতে তুমি আজ্ঞা কব (some verses omitted here)। একথা কহিয়া মহাদেবের চবণে ধবিত্তা সাধনা কবিলে মহাদেব বিমর্ষ চিত্তে কহিত্তেছেন শুন তোমাব পিতা পাষণ্ড আমাকে মানে না দেখ সে আমাকে অনাথ কবিত্তাব নিমিত্ত আমাকে নিমন্ত্রণ কবিত্ত না বিনা নিমন্ত্রণে তুমি গেলে সন্মান পাবা না এবং আমার নিন্দাতে তোমাব দ্রুত হইবেক পশ্চাত তাহাব বাবণ হইবেক না। অতএব অনিমন্ত্রিত স্থানে যাওয়া উচিত নহে। সতী কহিত্তেছেন প্রাণনাথ আপনাব মাতা পিতাব নিমন্ত্রণ অনিমন্ত্রণে কি হয় তাহাবদেব কাছে পূজ কন্যাব সন্মান অসন্মান কি আমার পিতা আমাকে বড়ই ভালবাসেন আমি বুঝি আমার অসন্মান করিবেণ না সতী যাওনের

উপরক্তা নিতান্ত শিবাচ্ছা না নহিলে সতী কিছুমানা মোহন করিতে  
 করিতে মহাকোষেতে ফোঁসিতা হইয়া পহএখে গতি করিলে মহাদেব  
 নন্দি মহাকাল সিব ( শিব ) সেবককে আঞ্জা করিলে মহাকাল মহাবান  
 লইয়া পশ্চাত্তর্জিতা করিয়া কতক দূরে গেল সেবী সে বানারোহণে  
 বক্ষ্যণর উপহিত্তি প্রসতী( প্রসূতী ) সতী কঙ্কাকে ধূটমাঞেই প্রোমানন্দে  
 গুলোকেত হইয়া পদপদ চিত্তে বাইরা কঙ্কায় সুবচুচন করিয়া ক্রোড়ে  
 করিয়া নৃত্য করিতে লাগিলেন এটমতে প্রোমানন্দ সতীও দাতাকে  
 প্রোণাম করিয়া আর আর সমস্ত ভগিনী ও অনাতাপনকে সম্ভাব করিয়া  
 যজ্ঞ স্থানে পিতার নিকটে বাইরা প্রোণাম করিলে দক্ষ তাহাকে দেখিবা  
 মাঞেই হরকোণে কোপিত হইয়া শিবনিম্নার প্রবর্ত হইল। কহিল  
 কঙ্কে তুমি কিমর্ষে এখানে আগিয়াছ তোমার স্বামী দুতের পতি প্ৰশাম  
 মনানে তাহার অবহিত্তি হাফমালা পলার সাপ লইয়া তাহার খেলা  
 বাদিয়ার বেশ তোমার কপাল মক্ষ অতএব এমত ঘটনা তোমাকে  
 হইয়াছে আমি তাহাকে নিমন্ত্রণ করিলাম না। এ দেবগতা আমি  
 এমার পুত্র বাদিয়ার নিমন্ত্রণ দেবগতার হইতে পাবে না। সতী  
 কহিলেন পিতা এমত কুৎসা মহাদেবের প্রতি কহ কেন মহাদেব দেব  
 দেব ব্রহ্মা বিষ্ণু ইত্যাদি বাহার পদবুগে পরণাগত যে হর মহাবীর  
 ঐশ্বর্যএরকে সাহার করিলেন যে হর কালকূট পান করিয়া সৃষ্টি রক্ষা  
 করিলেন তাহাকে কুৎসাব্যক্ত তোমা ব্যতিন্নেক কেহ কহে না তুমি এ  
 অসুচিত্ত জিয়া কেন কর। নন্দি কহিল দক্ষ নিম্নার প্রতিফল পাইবা  
 যে মুখে শিবনিম্না করিয়া তাতা তোমার নাশ হইয়া ছাগল বদন হইবেক  
 এ সকল বাক্যে দক্ষ পুনর্বার শিবনিম্না করিতে প্রবর্ত হইলে সতী  
 মহাকোষে উত্থান করিয়া কহিতেছেন পিতা সকলের উপযুক্ত শুকনিম্না  
 প্রবণে লোক নিম্নকের শির ছেদন করিবেক নতুবা নিজ প্রাপত্যাগ  
 করিবেক কিম্বা সে স্থান ত্যাগ করিবেক আমি আপন প্রাণ ত্যাগ  
 করিব তোমার আশ্রয় তছু আর রাখিব না এই কহিয়া কসম আট্টিয়া  
 পরিয়া বাইরা মধ্যস্থানে বসিয়া শিবরূপ দ্ব্যানে প্রাপত্যাগ করিলেন।  
 পতার মধ্যে দানাগণে কোলাহল করিলে দক্ষ তাহারদিককে মারিয়া

খেদিয়া দিবা। নন্দি দানাগণ সনুদায় শঠিয়া বোদন কবিত্ত কবিত্তে  
 শিবশাখাত নিবেদন কবিনানাত্রেই মহাদেব ক্রোধাবিষ্ট শিবেব লোনাঙ্কিত  
 হইতে হইতে মহাক্রোধাবেশ বালাস্তবানল জন হইয়া নস্তব হইতে  
 এক জটা ছেদন কবিয়া ফেলিগেই তাহাতে মহাবীৰ নীলড্র উতপন্ন  
 হইলেন বীবেব মস্তক গগনে স্পর্শ ববিলেক মহাদৰ্পবান বীৰ ডঠ চক্ষু  
 বজ্রবর্ণ সদা ক্রোধবুজু জগ্নিবানাত্রেই কবপুটে নিবেদন কবিলেন দেব-  
 দেব আনি কি কল্প কবিন। শিব কহিলেন দক্ষকে সংহাব কবহ এবং  
 নষ্ট কব তাহাব বজ্র আজ্ঞানুসাবে বীৰ সাতকোটি দানা সহিত মজ্জবান  
 হইয়া ক্ষণমাত্রেই দক্ষালয় উত্তবিয়া নখেতে দগ্ধেব ছেদন কবিয়া  
 বজ্রকুণ্ডে সনর্পণ কবিলেন এবং দানাগণে প্রস্তাব কবিয়া বজ্রকুণ্ডে পবিপূর্ণ  
 কবিল প্রাক্ষণকে পুথিব বজ্র দিবা বব বন্ধ কবিয়া নানা মত চর্নাতি  
 কবিল কাহাব শ্মশ্রু উৎপাটন কবে কাহাব দণ্ড ভাঁগিয়া ফেলে এই মত  
 অবস্থা সকলকে কবিয়া বজ্র নাশীয়া বাইয়া নিবেদন কবিল চত্ৰচূড়ব  
 সন্নিধানে। পবে মহাদেব সতী অঙ্গ দর্শনার্থে দগ্ধেব ভবনে উপহিত  
 হইয়া সতীব মৃত্যুপ্র নস্তকে কবিয়া নৃত্য কবিত্তে প্রবর্ত্ত এই মতে মহাদেব  
 নৃত্যে পৃথিবী ভাবাক্রান্ত হইবা আব সহিষ্ণুতা কবিত্তে পাবিলেন না  
 ব্যস্ত সনন্ত হইয়া একাব গোচব নিবেদন কবিলে ব্রহ্মা কহিলেন বিষ্ণু  
 ব্যতিবেক ইহাব উপাব আমাদিবা কিছু হইতে পাবে না। পবে  
 বিষ্ণুব শুব কবিয়া কহিলেন প্রভো পৃথিবী আব ভাব সহিতে পাবে না  
 এই মতে একা বিষ্ণু সেই যজ্ঞস্থানে বাইয়া বিবিধ প্রকাবে মহাদেবেব  
 শুব কবিয়া বিষ্ণু চক্রেতে সতী অঙ্গ ছেদন কবিত্তে কবিত্তে সাগুদায়িক  
 ছেদন হইয়া খণ্ড খণ্ড হইয়া পতন হইল। সাবণ্যে একান্ন ভাগ হইবা  
 একান্ন স্থানে পতন হইল সেই একান্ন স্থান হইল পৃথক পৃথক এক এক  
 পীঠস্থান তাহাতে মহাশক্তিব এক এক রূপ এবং এক এক ভৈবব  
 অধিষ্ঠান চুডামণি তপ্ত তাহাব বিশেষণ গিয়াছে অতএব এমনত মহাস্থান  
 তাহাব সেবাচর্যা প্রকৃত মত কবিবা তাহাব ইত্যাদিব উপব অতিক্রম  
 কবিবা না। সাবধান ইতি।

But the language of the strictly business letters are not so commendable and the ( ) Business letters contrast is noticeable. We select here two characteristic specimens even at the risk of being lengthy

(১) লম্বু পোষ্য শুরুকে ।<sup>১</sup>

প্রণামা বিজ্ঞাপনকৈ ঠহিণেবে ৮বাশিব অমানন্দ পরং । ভবানকার  
গনাচার অনেক দিবস না গাইরা একান্ত ভাবিত ছিলাম এখন শ্রীমন্ত-  
মোপাল ঘোষের হাতপাত্র (পত্র) গাইরা সমস্ত সমাচার জ্ঞাত হইয়া নিশ্চিন্ত  
হইলাম । নিষিদ্ধাছ আপনকার কস্তার বিবাহের সম্বন্ধ শ্রীকৃত রাজনারায়ণ  
(নারায়ণ) প্রায়েম সুপ্রেম লিখিত হইয়াছে তাহার কুলমধ্যমা (মধ্যমা) এক

শত টাকা দিতে হইবেক এ সম্বন্ধ ভাল বটে কিন্তু  
of a domestic nature

টাকার সাংগত্য বৃহত ব্যাপার এইক্ষণে তাহার  
সংবাদ কি একশত টাকা পণ দিতে হইবেক ভক্তিমান আপনারদের ব্যা-  
তিন চারি শত টাকা ন্যূনে হইতে পারিবেক না তাহার সকল সম্মতি  
এইক্ষণে হইতে পারিবেক না । আমার এখান হইতে একশত টাকার  
সুগার হইবে পারিবেক ইহার অধিক কণ্ঠক হইবে না বক্রি চারশত  
অল্প কোন স্থানে হইতে সম্মতি করিতে পার এমন স্থান আমি দেখিতে  
পাই না অন্তএব সুতরাং এ সম্বন্ধ এইক্ষণে হইতে পারিল না তবে  
বদি কোন স্থান হইতে টাকার সাংগত্য করিতে পরেন (পারেন) তবে  
প্রবর্ত হইবেন পক্ষাতি এ টাকা আমি পাঠাইয়া দিব তাহার ভাবনা  
কিছু করিবা না । শ্রীকৃত রাজা মহাশয় আশ্ব তিন দিবস হইল কল্যাণ  
পরগণার যাত্রা করিয়াছেন আমিও দুই এক দিনের মধ্যে যাত্রা করিব সে  
স্থানে বাইরা কার্যে না প্রবর্ত হইলে টাকার সকল সাংগত্য কি প্রকারে  
হয় কিন্তু পক্ষাতি হওনের বাধ হইবে না বদি এ সম্বন্ধ খানেক হইমাগ  
পরে হয় তবে কোন ব্যাঘাত হয় না শ্রীকৃত কৃষ্ণ দাস মহাশয়কে  
লিখিতেছি এ সম্বন্ধ এইক্ষণে না হইয়া পক্ষাতি আশ্রয়নাদিতে হয়

তিনি এনত কবিয়া দিবেন। শ্রীযুত বানমন্দের বহুজাকে আশীনাদিতে সে স্থানে পাঠাইবেন এক আদ কার্য্য অবশ্য কবিয়া দিতে পাবিব আশাকে সাত্তেবেব নিতন্ত (নিতান্ত) অন্তগ্রহ আছে ইহাতে যখন বাহা সাহেবকে কহি তাহা প্রামাণ্য কবেন কার্য্য অতি বড় হইয়াছে ইহাতে যদি কিছু কাল এই কার্য্য নির্বিঘ্নেতে গাবিতে পাবি তবে ঈশ্ববেচ্ছা যথেষ্ট লোকেব প্রতিপালন হইতে পাবিবে। সংপ্রতি এক কার্য্য উপস্থিত আছে বড় নন্দ নহে বহুজাকে যদি শীঘ্র পাঠাইতে পাবেণ তবে ইহাতেই প্রবর্ত কবিয়া দিতে পাবি নতুবা ঈশ্বরীপূজাব সনন আনি বাটী আসিব সাধ্যাত এনন্ত কহিয়া শুনিয়া পবানর্শপূর্বক বাহা হয় কবিব কিন্তু ইহাব মধ্যে যদি কোন আবশ্যক হয় তবে আপনি এ পর্য্যন্ত আসিবেন বিশেষ বিদিত হইয়া বাহা কর্তব্য তাহাব চেষ্টাচবিএ কবা বাইবেক কিম্বা আব কোন কোশলে কার্য্য চলে তবে তাহাই কবিব। শ্রীযুত বানগোবিন্দ বায় মহাশয় এখানে আসিয়াছিলেন অথ দুই দিবস হইল বাবাণশী প্রস্থান কবিয়াছেন তাহাব পত্র এখানে ছিল তাহা পাঠাইতেছি শীঘ্র তাহাব বাটীতে পাঠাইয়া দিবেন আনি তাহাকে একশত টাকা পথি ব্যায় নিমিত্ত দিয়া শ্রীযুত বানানন্দ বাবুব সহিত পাঠাইয়াছি পাটনা পর্য্যন্ত সচ্ছন্দ পৌশিতে পাবিবেন সেখান হইতে বাবু সাতি সম্রতি কবিয়া দিবেন সেজন্ত কোন ভাবনাব বিষয় নহে। এ সকল সমাচার তাহারদিগেব বাটীতে আপনি যাইয়া বিশেষ বিশেষণ কবিয়া কহিবেন বাটীব কেহ ব্যস্ত না হইয়েন যাতায়াতে মগলাদি নিখিবেন। কিম্বিকিমিতি।

(২) বাজা অথ বাজাকে।<sup>১</sup>

ইদানীন্ত পবিপ্রুব পবগণায় আপনকার পিতামহ বাপীখননেতে দৈবক্রমে কতগুলি ধনপ্রাপ্ত হইয়াছিলেন। তখন বাজাধিরাজ তাব প্রতি

<sup>১</sup> জিপিমালা, প্রথম খণ্ড, pp 32 37 Some verses are omitted at the beginning The extracts contain numerous *disjecta membra poetæ* To this letter there is an equally strong reply which want of space forbids us to quote

মনোবোগ করিলেন না কিন্তু হিরামন মাত্র ঘন আশ্রয়ে আশ্রয়  
করিয়াছিল। এপর্যন্ত এসময় হইলে তাহার ব্যয়ন হইল তথাচ সে ব্যক্তি  
বহুমেতে মন্ত্রীপণের মনোব্রজনা করিয়া বাদে দ্বারী হইল। সেই

মনোব্রজনা তাহার পুত্র কএকজন সেনা  
of a political nature.

সংগ্রহ করিয়া শিরসী পরগণার রাজা নিমন্ত্রণ  
বিধো। হইলে তাহার কিকিত অধিকার কার্যক্রমে সেনায় প্রত্যয়গণ্যে  
অস্ত্রায় ফিরা করিয়া ঠিহ অধিকার করিয়াছিলেন। পিতা হইতে পুত্র  
তাগ্যবত্ত ও অন্তঃপন্ন ছিল বটে তথাচ এই দ্বারের অপেক্ষিক কখন  
অহঙ্কারে মত্ত হইতেন না। এবং অস্ত্রের হিংসাহীন ছিলেন এখন তিনি  
আগনি দৈবপরাক্রান্ত লোক দান শৌর্য কীর্তি বীৰ্য্য রাজ্য স-সে  
মহা অহঙ্কৃত এবং দেবীসীমার চর বাহ্য চিরকালাবধি এ মহাপ্রাণ্যভূক্ত  
শিরসীর সহিত তাহার কোন অংশাংশী নাই তথাচ আপনকার ইচ্ছা নিম্ন  
পরাক্রমে তাহা অধিকার করণ একি আশ্চর্য্য ভাল ভাল এও ভাল  
আপনকার এমত এমত পরাক্রম হইল এ একটা আনন্দের দিবস বটে  
কিন্তু তন কহি অবধান কর একি তুমি কোন মাহুবে যে তুমি কটক  
পাঁচনী কর এ অফণের উপর এ তোমার কি প্রকার ইতর বিবেচনা  
কোথা তনিরাহ তনি আহারে শার্দূল খুকিত হও। এ সামান্য বিবর  
প্রবুদ্ধ এখানকার কোলের বাহন্য হয় না শূণ্যের গর্ভনে কেশরী নাহি  
মোবে বহিকু হইল তবে তোমার কি গতিক হইবে কোথায় বাইবা  
তোমার সহায় বা কে এবং রক্ষা বা কে করিতে পারে। এখানকার  
ক্রোধ বহি হয় তবে প্রতি ইচ্ছাশা করিলেও না পাবে রক্ষা বৈরিদম্য  
সেনা মোর বজপি কোণে নটনক্রমেতে সংহার করিবে। লকুটুখে সাবধান  
আপনার পিতৃপিতামহের স্মৃতিভিত্তিতে স্মৃতিভিত্তিত হইয়া কোন ক্রমে  
বিনশিত করিতেছ ইহাতে বিদ্রস কেন কর এখানকার সহিত প্রতি-  
যোগিতা করিয়া তুমি কি স্থির করিবা। নিম্নাধিপ রাজা বলবত্ত মায়  
বাক্য অসম্মা সেনা এবং দর্শমান কত বড় তাহার পরাক্রমের সীমা  
কি বদনম বৈরী হৈলে ঘৃষ্টে করে ভেদ। তাহার রাজ্য পঞ্চবিংশতি  
দিবসের পঞ্চবিংশতি সেনার কোলাহল সিদ্ধগর্জনপ্রায় এমত মহারাজা

নবপবী নগবেব আশে যাহা পূর্বে তাহাব কখন ছিল কি কিমত আপন শক্তি আক্রান্ত কবিয়া বণ কবিল বৎসবাবধি সে বিবোধ উপস্থিত ছিল। যখন বৈবীদম্য সেনা আপনাবদেব পবাঞমে দস্তায়মান হইলে সহজে বলবন্তকে সংহাব কবিয়া এবং তাহাব প্রতিবাদী যে কেহ আসিয়া হইল সমস্তকে নিবাবণ কবিল জয় জয়কাবধনি সর্বত্র ব্যাপক কবাইল। এখন সে নিসাদবাজ্য এ অধিকাবভুক্ত ইহাতে তোমাব একি বুদ্ধি শিবা হইয়া কব বাদ সিংহেব সহিত তুমি কাঙাণে এ প্রযুক্ত তোমাকে কহি সাবধান সাবধান এমত এমত চঃসাহস আব কখন করিও না। তুমি দীন এখানকাব লেখায় দবিএ সহায়হীন তোমাব উচিত যদি দেবীসীমাব চবে তোমাব সেনাব গমন হইবা থাকে ইহাতে সেখানকাব প্রজারদেব যে কিছু ক্ষেতি হইয়া থাকে তাহাব দ্বিগুণ কবিয়া দিয়া তাহাবদিগকে পবিতোধ কবহ যাহাতে তাহাবা এ পর্য্যন্ত আন্দোলন না কবে। তাহা হইলে বক্ষা পাওয়া ভাব। বাহা হউক। এমত এমত কবিয়া নবাক্ষব-বর্গে ও সৈম্বে একএ হইয়া বৈবীদম্য সেনাব সাধনা কবিলে বুকি বক্ষা হইতে পাবে বা। এ কাবণ ক্ষীণ হীন দীন অকিঞ্চন লোকেব ব্যামোহেতে আমাব অন্তব সদা কাতব এবং শুবেব বশ অতএব ইহাই কব কহি শুন যদি তোমাব ভাগ্যোদয় ক্রমে জ্ঞানেব বাহণ্য হয় তবেই সে তোমাব বক্ষা নতুবা নয়। কিন্তু যদি ছুষ্ঠনতি তোমাব প্রকৃতিব সখা হইয়া থাকে তবে আব হিতোপদেশেব আবশ্যক নাই সৈম্ভ সাজনা বাহিব হইবা সমাচাব লিখিলেই বৈবীদম্য প্রস্তুত হবেক। ইহাব যাহাতে অভিকটি কিন্তু অখই দেবীসীমা হইতে লোক উঠাইয়া গহ তাহাব দ্বিগুণ গোণ কবিবা না। তোমাব দশা গোডাধিপ ও একদব সাহেব মত হবেক উপায় কি ইতি।

As we have already remarked, the prevalence of Persian words, which is so conspicuous a feature of *Pratāpāditya-charitra*, has almost disappeared in this publication. There is a marked tendency towards the use of Sanscrit words, but at the same time, in spite of elaborate superscription<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p 185 But simpler superscription too, e.g., প্রাণপ্রতিম ত্রীয়ুক্ত অনুক পরম কদ্যাপবধে (p 191) But these are mere matters of form

like অনন্যগতিক পোষাস্য পরমভট্টালী নিবেদনক বিশেষঃ মহাশয়ের  
 অনুমোদিত দ্ব্যভঙ্গী নিবৃত্ত প্রাচীনতা ওঃ নিবৃত্তিপরাঃ the style is

Its style more sans not laboured or pedantic like that of  
 critised yet not some other pundits of the College In  
 pedantic or elaborate this Rām Basu was proving himself

a true disciple of Carey and Rām mohan from the former  
 he learned to make the best use of the popular language and  
 avoid academic affectation of laboured style and from the  
 latter he got an insight into the strength and power of the  
 language on account of its close relation to the classical  
 Sanscrit The syntax and orthography however are still  
 imperfect although there is a great

Improvement pon improvement indeed upon those of  
 Professed teach tra

*Pratāpaditya-charitra* Considering  
 the growth and progress it is to be regretted that Rām  
 Basu's severance of all connexions with the College put an  
 end to all opportunities of further and better prose-writing

A better specimen of easy prose writing is to be found  
 in Golak with Śarmā's translation of *Hitopadeś* 'noticeable

if not for its matter certainly for  
 its form It was published before

*Lipimāla* but about the same time as  
*Pratāpaditya charitra* yet it displays great superiority of

বিশিষ্ট নব। সমগ্র ভাষিত। পৌনঃপুন্য কর্তৃক প্রস্তুত। প্রাকৃতিক দ্বারা  
 হইল। ১৮১১, *Hitopadesha or Beneficial Instruction Translated from*  
 the original Bengali by Golak the Pundit Serampore Printed at the  
 Mission Press 1802. pp. 147 Yates, I hi Selection (*Intro to Bengali*  
*Language* vol. II) does not quote from this work but from the version of  
 Mityāñjay Yates himself published a translation of *Hitopadeś* in 1848.  
 Besides Mityāñjay Bidyāśāhkar's version, there is another version  
 published in 1830 in Sanscrit Bengali and English (editions in 1844  
 1848, 1850 and 1860) by Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Nyāyāśāhkar Librarian  
 to the College of Fort William (afterwards Sadler Amoen) and  
 O Wilkie's (*Long Return of Names* etc p 133) A copy of this  
 work will be found in the Library of the Board of Examiners.



language and manner It is a pretty close but easy translation of the four books of the well-known moral essay unabridged and unexpurgated and the prose is plain and unassuming, except for a little quaintness

Its language

smacking of the *tol* pundit and a little irregularity of syntax here and there Although itself based upon a Sanscrit original and the author him-

self a learned pundit, well-versed, it may be, in the classical language there is yet no trace of any affectation of pedantry or magnificence The style is free also from the Persian influence so conspicuous in Rām Basu's works There is some attempt at periodic prose, but the syntax and arrangement, imitating commentorial queerness, is not all that could be desired, though it is certainly more correct and easy than that of *Pratāpāditya* or *Lipimālā* With no conscious purpose of developing a prose style but with many unconscious experiments at arrangement and adjustment, here is, as in Carey's *Dialogues* or *Itihās-mālā*, much simplicity and desire to make the language clear and useful There is hardly any necessity of quoting too many extracts, for the style, besides being plain and simple, has hardly any marked impressiveness of its own. The following extract

Also in Blumhardt, *op cit* p 115 116) A copy of Golak-nāth Śarmā's version is in the library of the British Museum bearing the same date and place of publication as we have given above (Blumhardt, *op cit* p 115) Seton Karr in his article on Bengali Literature in *Cal Rev*, 1849 (p 499) is rather severe in his criticism on this work, but his views were formed, it seems, on the "condensed and corrected" specimens from this work given in Yates's *Introduction*, vol II (1847) ed by Wenger The work under review is entered as Golak nāth's and dated 1801 in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon East India Company*, 1845, p 195 The date 1802, given in the *Tenth Memoir*, is inaccurate, but it follows the date given on the English title page of the book

will be found illustrative. It is taken from the beginning or introduction<sup>1</sup> where the Princes are introduced to Vinayakam who begins teaching by narrating the stories —

সৰ্গে বিচিত্র কথা এবং নীতিবিজ্ঞানাদিক সে কি মত তাহার বিশেষ  
 কহি। পণ্ডিত যে ব্যক্তি সে বিচার্য কি মত  
 চিন্তা করে তাহা শুন। আমরা আমরাবৎ  
 আব ধৰ্ম্মাচরণ কেমন যেমত কমেতে কেশকৰ্ষণ করিয়া থাকে তাহা শুন।  
 অপর বিজ্ঞাবত্ত সকল এবোম মৰ্য্যে অকৃত্যওন কহিয়াছেন তাহার কারণ  
 এই অহরনীর অমূল্য অপরূপ অংশির অধিকার নাহি ও চোরেস অধিকার  
 নাহি এবং দানেতেও অর নাহি অতএব বিজ্ঞাৱত্ত মহাবন সংজ্ঞা।  
 তাহার শক্তি কি কি বিজ্ঞা বিনয়দাতা বিনয় পাএদাতা পাত্ত বনদাতা  
 বন ধৰ্ম্ম ও ব্রহ্মদাতা এ সকল বিষয় কহিলে পুত্ৰক বাহন্য হয় অতএব  
 যৎকেনে কিছু কিছু কহিব। সত্যি মিঞাত্ত স্কন্ধেধ বিএই সক্তি।  
 এই চারিভাগ।

কোন নদীর তীরেতে পাটলী পুত্র নামের এক নগর আছে সে  
 স্থানে সৰ্গবাসী শুণোপেত এমৰ্ষন নামে রাজা ছিল। সেই রাজা  
 এককালে কোন কাহার মুখে হই প্রোক শুনিলেন তাহার অৰ্থ এই  
 শাস্ত্র সকলের গোচন অতএব যে শাস্ত্র না জানে সেই অন্ধ। আর বৌবন  
 ধন সম্পত্তি প্রভৃষ অবিবেক ইহাৱ বহি এক থাকে তবেই অনৰ্থ সমুদায়  
 থাকিলে না জানি কি হয়। ইহা শুনিয়া সেই রাজা অত্যন্ত উদ্ভিগ্ন  
 বনে চিন্তা করিতে লাগিলেন যে আমায় পুত্রেরা অতি দুৰ্ব্ব অতএব  
 ইহাৱদের কি হবে। এমন পুত্র থাকা না থাকা তুল্য। যে পুত্র  
 অবিজ্ঞান ও অবার্ণিক সে পুত্রের কি কার্য যেমন কানায় চক্ষুশীড়া  
 মাত্র। যদি পুত্র হইয়া মরিত কিবা না হইত সে কেবল একবার হৃষ  
 কিন্তু মুখ পুত্র প্রতিপদে। বিভাবুত্ত এবং সাধু যদি এক পুত্র হয়

The story is so well known to require an analysis of its contents here.

তিনি পুরুষের মধ্যে সিংহ। যেন চন্দ্র। বাদৃশ বহনোতে চন্দ্র উদয়  
 না হইলে কোটি কোটি নক্ষত্রে অরুণার নাশ কবিত্তে পাবে না তাদৃশ  
 এক শত মূৰ্ত্তি পুত্র জানিবা এক স্তম্ভের তুল্য নহে। অপব যে ব্যক্তি  
 অনেক দান ও পুণ্য কবে তাহার পুত্র ধনবান ও ধীবান ও ধার্মিক হয়।  
 স্বর্ণ কৰ্ত্তা পিতা শত্রু নাতা অপ্রিয়বাদিনী ভাৰ্য্যা রূপবতী পুত্র অপভিত।  
 উচ্চ বা নীচ হউক গুণবান সকল স্থানে পূজনীয়। যেন বংশের গুণমূল  
 ধনুক নিগূর্ণ কি কার্য্যেব। যে পুত্র না পাঠ কবে সে পুত্র পণ্ডিতের  
 মধ্যে কীদৃশ যেন পদেব মধ্যে গণ্য পড়িলে হয়। গৰ্ভস্থ মন্থন্যেব এই  
 পাচ যোগ হইয়া থাকে আয়ু কৰ্ম্ম বিত্ত বিদ্যা নিধন। বিত্ত যদি কেহ  
 ভাবে যে বা হবাব তা হবে সে অতি অশেষ কথা তাহার প্রমাণ যেন  
 বথের গতি কেবল চক্রেতে হয় না এবং পুরুষ কাবের চেষ্টা ব্যতিবেক  
 হয় না। অপব কুপ্তকব আপন ইচ্ছানিত তাহার কার্য্য কবিত্তে পাবে  
 তাদৃশ আয়ুক্ত কৰ্ম্ম মন্থন্যে কবিত্তে পাবে। অপবক কাবৈব তাল  
 ফেলার ত্রায় অগ্রে নিবি দেখিয়া পায় তাহা ঈশ্বর দত্ত বটে কিন্তু পুরুষার্থ  
 অপেক্ষা কবে যদি কোন কাহাব অগ্রে পাকা তাল কাবৈ ফেলায় সে  
 দেখিয়া যদি না যায় তবে কখন পাবে না অতএব যে পিতা মাতা তাহার  
 পুত্রকে না পড়ায় সে শত্রু এবং সে পুত্র সভাব মধ্যে কেমন দীপ্তি হয়  
 যেন হংসের মধ্যে বক। যুকেব শোভা যাবৎ কিছু না বলে তাবৎ  
 মাত্র। মোটা দ্রব্য চিকণ হয় ও চিকণ মোটা হয় যেন চন্দ্র কৃষ্ণ পক্ষ ও  
 শুক্ল পক্ষে। সে রাজা এই সকল চিন্তা কবিয়া পণ্ডিতের সভা কবিলেন।  
 ভো ভো পণ্ডিতেরা অবধান কব। আমার পুত্রেরা নিত্য উৰ্দ্ধা পথগামী  
 অতএব তাহাবদেব নীতিশাস্ত্রে পুনর্বার জন্ম দেহ। যথা কাকন  
 সংসর্গতে কাচ যে তিনি বহুমূল্য প্রস্তুবেব দীপ্তি ধারণ কবেন তথা  
 সন্নিধানোতে মূৰ্ত্তি যে তিনি প্রবীণতা পান। তাহার স্থল এই যদি হীনের  
 সহিত থাকে তবে হীন মতি হয় সমানেব সংসর্গে সমতা হয় বিশিষ্টেব  
 সহিত থাকিলে বিশিষ্টতা পায়। অতঃপবে বিষ্ণুশৰ্ম্মা নামেতে ব্রাহ্মণ  
 মহাপণ্ডিত সকল নীতিশাস্ত্রের বৃহস্পতিব ত্রায় কহিলেন হে মহারাজা এই  
 সকল বাজপুত্রেরদিগকে আমি নীতিশাস্ত্রেতে জ্ঞান কবিয়া দিব। বিনা

ব্যাপারে কাহার কিছু হয় না অতএব আমি মহারাজার পুত্রেরদিগকে  
 হয় নামের মধ্যে বেরসে হয় সেইরূপে নীতিশাস্ত্রেতে জ্ঞান অন্বেষণ দিব  
 মহারাজা তাহারদিগের কারণ কোন চিন্তা করিবেন না। মহারাজা  
 বিনয় পূর্বক পুনর্দ্বার করিতেছেন। যদি কীট পুস্তকের সহিত থাকে তবে  
 যতদূর শিরে আনোহেন করে। আর সাধু ব্যক্তি বড়পি পাথর স্থাপন  
 করে তবে সে পাথর লেবড় পায়। যেমত পর্বতের উপরের ত্রব্য নিকটে  
 দীপ্তি হয় তেমন যতদূর নিকটে হীনবর্ণের দীপ্তি হয়। অতএব বিষ্ণু-  
 শরীরকে বহনধাড়া করিয়া রাজা আপন পুত্রেরদিগকে লইয়া সমর্পণ  
 করিলেন।<sup>1</sup>

It would be convenient to notice here briefly Gilchrist's translation of *Æsop's* and other fables from the English language. Although done under the direction and supervision of Dr Gilchrist<sup>2</sup> it must be borne in mind that the version occurs in a book of polyglot translation (six versions) of *Æsop's* and other fables into the various dialects of India<sup>3</sup> done by various hands. For the Bengali version is responsible one Tāripitcharan Mitra who was employed especially for Bungla, Persian and Hindoostanee. He is called a

Dr John B Gilchrist's *Oriental Fabelist* 1803.

হিতোপদেশ, pp 3-8

Dr John Barthwick Gilchrist LL.D F.R.S.E was Professor of Hindustani in the Fort William College. He was well versed in numerous dialects of India and wrote a number of works on Hindustani.

This translation will be found in a publication of the Fort William College entitled the *Oriental Fabelist* (1803) by John Gilchrist. It contains Polyglot Translation of *Æsop's* and other ancient fables from the English Language into Hindoostanee Persian Arabic Brydhakha Bengla & S. It is the Roman Character by a most able & diligent direction and superintendence of John Gilchrist for the use of the College of Fort William Calcutta. Printed at the Harknly office 1803. (See Roebuck op. cit. App II p. 27 Buchanan op. cit. p. 221)

learned native" in the Preface by Dr Gilchrist who also pays him a high tribute when he says "it behoves me now more particularly to specify that to Tārnīcharan Mitra's (sic) patient labour and considerable proficiency in the English tongue, am I greatly indebted for the accuracy and dispatch with which the collection has been at last completed. The public may feel and duly appreciate the benefit of his assiduity and talents, evident in the Bungla version"<sup>1</sup> Tārnīcharan Mitra was "Head Moon-shee" in the Hindustani Department appointed in May, 1801 - Tārnīcharan thus seems also to have been proficient in Persian and Hindustani. We select here a short piece as a specimen

বট কথা । গৌকশিনালী ও দাওকাবাব ।

এক গৌকশিনালী দেখিলেক এক দাওকাক ভাল এক টুবাব  
 পোনীবাব আপন মুখে লইয়া গাছেব ডালেব  
 উপব বদিয়া বহিবাছে, তৎক্ষণাৎ গৌকশিনালী  
 বিবেচনা কবিত্তে লাগিল যে এমন সুস্বাদু গ্রাস কেনন ববিয়া হাত  
 কবিত্তে পাবিব । কহিলেক, হে প্রিয় কাক, আজি নবালে তোমাব  
 দেখিয়া আনি বড় সন্তুষ্ট হইবাছি, তোমাব সুন্দর মুক্তি আব উজ্জল পালক  
 আনিব চক্ষুব জ্যোতি, যদি নতুনাক্রমে তুমি অল্পগ্রহ কবিয়া আমাবে  
 একটি গান শুনাইতে তবে নিঃশঙ্কহ জানিতাম যে তোমাব স্বব তোমাব

<sup>1</sup> p xxiv xxv Dr Gilchrist in the Preface (p xxv) to this work, expresses his intention of publishing the Bengali version, which seems to be the best, in a separate form, not in Roman but in Bengali character. I do not know whether it was ever published. Long mentions Dr Gilchrist's translation of the *Æsop's fable* published in 1803. I have not been able to trace this separate publication if it ever existed.

<sup>2</sup> Roebuck, *op cit* App III p 48

আব আব শুণেব স্নান বটে। আনন্দোদয় শাক এষ্ট ধূনয় কথাতে  
 কুন্দিয়া শাহাকে আপন যবেষ পৰিপাটী জেলাইবাব ভাঙে মুখ গুলিলেক  
 তখন পোনাৰ নীচ পড়িল শাহা তখনি নেকশিয়ানী উঠাইয়া লইয়া  
 চাফুৰে প্ৰস্থান কৰিলেক আব পাড়কাসকে অৱশয়ক্ৰমে আপন  
 বিপাগলিহাৰ খেৰ সলিলে মাগিয়া ৷ ১।

টোকা যন এষ্ট দেশনে আবোপিত কথা প্ৰবেশ কৰে সেখানে  
 আনগাচৰ লোপ পায়।<sup>১</sup>

It is no little credit to the writer of this passage as the reader will observe that the prose for a translated piece shows great improvement indeed upon what had been published hitherto and it is with great difficulty that we resist the temptation of giving more extracts of this simple homely style. This work resembles much Carey's *Itihās malā* in its perspicuity and elegance although the latter book was published almost a decade after this. It is by always aiming

to be plain accurate and natural that the language of this work succeeds in attaining such excellence of diction among contemporary records in spite of its very close adherence to its English original and occasional imitation as in the passage quoted of English and Persian construction. It is to be regretted however that the writer of these pieces never tried his hand at original prose-writing which if he had touched he might have adorned in a way better than many of his contemporaries.

<sup>The implicit elegance of its prose</sup> <sup>1</sup> <sup>the language of this work succeeds</sup>  
 In *One of the First* (1867) ed. by Gillchrist p. 25, in the transliteration I have corrected the spelling otherwise no alteration is made; for the transliteration seems to have been made according to sound rather than according to spelling. The transliterated version in Roman letters is given in Appendix III at the end of this volume where a note also will be found on this system of transliteration; for which I am indebted to Professor Sumit Kumar Chatterji.

Chandīcharan Munshī's <sup>1</sup> *Totā Itihās* and Rājib Lochan Mukhopādhyāy's *Rājā Kṛṣṇachandira Rāyer Charita*, both published in the same year, exhibit however noticeable contrast of style and language. *Totā Itihās* <sup>2</sup> is by far the better work both in form and subject, although it is a mere translation from some Persian original and its language shows admixture of Persian. It consists of thirty-four "tales of a parrot," as its name implies, and is said to have been translated from a Persian original "*Tootanamah*" <sup>3</sup>. Similar collections of tales there are

<sup>1</sup> Called Chunder Churn Moonshee by Buchanan (*op cit* p 229) which is evidently a mistake

<sup>2</sup> There are copies of the first edition in the Library of the Board of Examiners and Presidency College Library. The title page says তোতা ইতিহাস । বাঙ্গাল ভাষাতে । শ্রীচণ্ডীচরণ মুন্সীতে রচিত । শ্রীবামপুবে ছাপা হইল । ১৮০৫ । Roebuck (*op cit* App II p 29) and Buchanan (*op cit* p 228) also give this date of publication. The copy in the Sāhitya Parīṣat Library (and also one in the British Museum Library), which seem to be reprints of 1825, bear a somewhat different title page শ্রী । তোতা ইতিহাস ॥ বাঙ্গাল ভাষাতে ॥ শ্রীচণ্ডীচরণ মুন্সীতে রচিত ॥ লণ্ডন রাজধানীতে চাপা হইল ॥ ১৮২৫ ॥ The fount of this latter reprint is very neat. Misled probably by the date of this edition, Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History*, p 890) puts the date apparently of the first edition at 1826. The copy of an edition in the British Museum Library bears 1806 as the date of publication (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p 31). There is also mention of a 12mo Ed printed in London 1811 in the *Catalogue of the Library of East India College*, and an 8vo Ed London 1811 is entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon East India Company*, p 196. There is a curious diglot edition (English Bengali) of this work in the Sāhitya Parīṣat Library the Bengali version appears on the right and English on the left side on the same page. The date cannot be ascertained for the title page is lost, but judging from the typography, it seems to have been printed in London.

<sup>3</sup> Buchanan, *op cit* p 228. Chandīcharan is also said to have

also in Sanscrit the most well known among which is the *Śuka-śaptati* or *Seventy Stories of a Parrot* <sup>1</sup>

We give here a description of the work under review and it is interesting to compare it with the Sanscrit version. A wife whose husband is travelling abroad and who is inclined to run after other men turns to her husband's clever talking parrot for advice. The bird while seeming to approve of her wicked plans warns her of the risks she runs and makes her promise not to go and meet any paramour unless she can extricate herself from difficulties as so-and-so did. Requested to tell the story he does so but in the meantime the story is spun out to such a length that when it is concluded morning dawns and her plans are postponed till next night. Thus the bird succeeds in keeping his mistress in the path of rectitude not by pointed injunctions but by a device similar to that which *Shehrazade* in the *Arabian Nights* employs to hinder the Sultan from sacrificing a fresh victim on every succeeding day. Several days pass in this way till the husband returns to find the honour of his home inviolate. This is the frame-work which contains the thirty four stories some of which are very amusing indeed although many of them are somewhat coarse. It is written in simple narrative prose eminently suited to the purpose of the book and although cried down for its slight inevitable admixture of Persian especially at the beginning the language is in no way inferior to that of *Histopiques* or *Oriental Fables* and certainly marks great advance in simplicity and naturalness upon *Pratyaṅgīya-charitra* or *Iṣṭawāla*. Its literary

translated the *Nāgabaddhā* from Sanscrit into Bengali; this work, if published at all I have not been able to trace.



pretensions are few indeed, but the writer is a very good story-teller and has succeeded in making his book interesting, both in form and matter”<sup>1</sup>

The following quotation of a shorter story will serve both as specimen of its tales and of its language<sup>2</sup>

একজন চৌকিদার বাজা তেববস্তানেব সহিত হিতকৰ্ম্ম কবিবাহিন  
তাহাব প্রসঙ্গ এই।

যখন দিবাগত বাত্রি উপস্থিত হইল তখন খোজেষ্টা<sup>3</sup> বহুমূল্য শয্যা  
হইতে গাএোথান কবিবা নানাবিধ খাওসানগ্রী আব বলাদি আনাইরা  
ভোজন কবিবা আপন চন্দ্রতুল্য বদন সাজাইবা স্বৰ্ণকপোব হুএব বস্ত্র  
পৰিধান কবিবা শুকপক্ষিব মণীপে আসিবা বাজপুএব<sup>4</sup> নিকট বাইতে

<sup>1</sup> This book seems to have become very popular, Dr Yates, in his *Selection*, gives 18 stories from it alone. Dr Yates, however, stretches his point too far when he says that the language of this work is deserving of attention because it is “a very fair specimen of the colloquial language and its almost unbounded negligence” (Rev W Yates, *Introduction to the Bengali Language* in two volumes 1847 ed by J Wenger, vol. II containing *Selections from Bengali Literature*, p. 1) Haughton’s *Selections* (1822) contain 10 stories from it. The book was also translated into Hindusthani. See Roebuck op cit App II p. 24, “*Tota Kuhanee* a Translation into the Hindoosthanee Tongue, of the popular Persian Tales, entitled *Tootee Namu*, by Sneyid Huedur Buksh Hueduree, under the superintendence of John Gilchrist, for the use of the students in the College of Fort William, Calcutta printed at the Hindoosthanee Press in one vol 4to 1804”

<sup>2</sup> This story also occurs in another form in the *Hitopades*. It is also quoted in Haughton’s *Selections*, p. 12 18, trans p. 92 96

<sup>3</sup> This is the wife whose husband Maymun has gone abroad, this introductory passage as well as the conclusions forms the link which connects a particular story with what precedes and what follows it, and is thus a part of the framework into which stories of miscellaneous character are thrown in

<sup>4</sup> This is the paramour with whom an appointment was made to meet at midnight

শিয়ার চাহিলেন। শুক কহিলেক যে তুমি মনে লিচু উষিরা হইও না  
আজ্ঞাসিত থাক আমি তোমার কণ্ঠে চেঁচিও আছি তোমাকে রাত  
পুত্রের নিকট পছন্দাইব কিন্তু রাজপুত্রের যে প্রতি আয় ভাগবাসা  
তোমাকে আছে শাহা তুমি জনসে রাশিয়া যেমন চৌকিদার আপন  
মনেও তেবরদান বাচাকে তবলা ভাটা করিয়া ধন শাইরাছিল তুমি  
তরুণ রাজপুত্রকে ভাঙ্গা করিও তবে তোমাকে অবশ্য পাইয়া। শোভেতা  
ইহা শুনিয়া শুককে প্রশংসা করিলেন যে তেবরদান বাচার উপাখ্যান  
কিছল তাহা কহ।—

শুক উত্তর করিল যে পুরোধার ও মন্ত্রীরা এমত কহিয়াছেন  
যে রাজা তেবরদান এক দিবস আপন সভা বৃর্গের দ্বার সাতাইয়া  
উত্তম অন্ন বাচন এবং নানাশ্রদ্ধার মন্যাসে ও মন্ত্রণা ও মন্ত্রণে রাখিয়া  
ঐ সে যে রাজপুত্র ও মন্ত্রীকে ও পণ্ডিত ও শিক্ষাগুরুদিগকে  
সেই স্থানে উপস্থিত করিয়া সেই সব উত্তম তথা তাঁহাদিগকে  
ভোজন করাষ্টেছিলেন ইহা মধ্যে অন্য। সেই স্থানে একজন  
বিশেষ উপস্থিত হইল। দশম বাচনভাষা প্রবাসেরা তাহাকে  
ভিজ্ঞানিলেন যে তুমি কে কোথা হইতে আসিয়াছ কি কার্য  
কর। সেই ব্যক্তি উত্তর করিলেক যে আমি তেবরদান নারিতে আর  
ব্যস্ত পরিশে পাবি ইহা ব্যি পেক আর আর রূপ নিরুপ্ত জাত  
আছি আর তীর এমত নারিতে পারি যে আমার তীর কতিন প্রভেদে  
ছিন্ন করিয়া নির্গত হয় এবং ধর্মেশ্বর নানা একজন বনবান আছে  
আমি কিছু দিবস তাঁহার নিকটে চাকর ছিলাম কিন্তু ধর্মেশ্বর আমার  
কিছু মন বিবেচনা করিয়া বুঝিলেন না অতএব আমি তাঁহার চাকরি  
ত্যাগ করিয়া মহারাজ তেবরদানের নাম শুনিয়া তাঁহার নিকট চাকরি  
করিতে আসিয়াছি। মহারাজা তেবরদান এই কথা শুনিয়া রাজ  
ধরনারের লোকেরদিগকে আজ্ঞা দিলেন যে এই ব্যক্তিকে চৌকিদারি  
কর্মে নিযুক্ত কর। পবে কর্মকর্তারা রাজাআজ্ঞার প্রত্যেক চৌকিদারি  
চাকুরিতে নিযুক্ত করিলেন। সেই জন প্রত্যহ রাতিতে এক পবে  
শাইরা রাজার অষ্টালিকারদিগে দৃষ্টি করিয়া থাকে এক দিবস

অর্দ্ধবাত্রেব পবে বাজা উপব ঘাবব ছাতে দেডাইয়া সবল দিগে দৃষ্টি  
 কবিত্তে ২ নীচেতে দেখিলেন যে এক জন এব পাদে দাডাইয়া বহিয়াছে।  
 বাজা তাহাকে দেখিয়া হিজাসিলেন তুমি বে বট অর্দ্ধ নিশাতে  
 কি কাবণ এক পদে দাডাইয়া আছ। চৌকিদাব কহিলেক যে বাজ-  
 দর্শনার্থে আকাঙ্ক্ষিত ছিলান অদ্য আনাব ভাগ্যেব সহকাৰেতে দর্শন  
 কবিয়া বড আহলাদিত আনোদিও হইলান। বাজা আব চৌকিদাবেতে  
 এই বগোপকথন হইতেছিল ইতিমধ্যে নাঠেব দিগ হইতে এক শব্দ  
 বাজাব কর্ণকুহবে প'ছছিল সে শব্দ এই একজন কহিতেছে যে আমি  
 যাইতেছি কে এনাও মনুষ্য আছে যে আনাকে বিবাইবে। ইহা শুনিয়া  
 বাজা বিস্মিত হইয়া চৌকিদাবে কহিলেন যে ওহে চৌকিদাব এ শব্দের  
 বৃত্তান্ত তুমি কিছু জানহ। চৌকিদাব উত্তর কবিল ও মহাবাজ কএক  
 দিবস বাত্রিযোগে এইরূপ শব্দ শুনিতেছি কিন্তু চৌকিদাবি কশ্মেতে  
 থাকিতে কাবণ গমন কবিয়া জাত হইতে পারি না যে এ শব্দ কাহাব  
 যদি আপনি আত্মা দেন তবে অতি শীঘ্র গমন কবিয়া শব্দেব নিশ্চয়  
 জানিবা তোনাৰ দাসেবদেব মাফাতে বিস্তারিত নিবেদন কবিত্তে পারি।  
 বাজা কহিলেন শীঘ্র যাইবা নম্বাদ আনহ। চৌকিদাব বাজাজ্ঞা পাইয়া  
 তৎক্ষণাৎ গমন কবিলেন। পবে বাজা বৃক্কবর্ণ এক কথনেতে শবীব  
 চাকিবা চৌকিদাবেব পশ্চাৎ গেলেন। চৌকিদাব সে স্থানে প'ছছিয়া  
 দেখিল যে পথমধ্যে এক স্তম্ভবী দাডাইয়া কহিতেছে যে আমি যাইতেছি  
 আনাকে কে বিবাইবেক। ইহা শুনিয়া চৌকিদাব প্রশ্ন কবিলেক  
 যে ও স্ত্রীলোক তুমি এমত কথা কেন কহিতেছ। সে স্ত্রীলোক উত্তর  
 কবিলেক যে আমি বাজা তেববস্তানেব পবনায়ু প্রতিমূর্ত্তী বাজাব আয়ুঃ  
 শেষ হইয়াছে তাতএব আমি যাইতেছি। চৌকিদাব ইহা শুনিয়া  
 কহিলেন তুমি বাজাব পবনায়ু এখন তুমি কিরূপে বাহাডিবা থাকিবে।  
 প্রতিবিশ্ব কহিলেন শুন হে চৌকিদাব এদ্যপি তুমি আপন পুত্রকে  
 বাজাব পবনায়ু বদলেতে আনাব সপ্তস্থে বলিদান দেও তবে আমি  
 অবশ্য ফিবিয়া থাকিব বাজাও কতক কাল বাঁচিবা থাকিবেন কদাচ  
 শীঘ্র নবিবেন না। চৌকিদাব ইহা শুনিয়া তুষ্ট হইয়া উত্তর কবিলেক

যদি আবার ঐশ্বর আর আমার পুত্রের ঐশ্বর এই ছই দিলেও রাজা  
 রক্ষা পান তবে অবশ্য দিব দিচ্ছ তুমি ন্যূনতম বিলম্ব কর আমি বাটী  
 বাইরা আপন সম্মানকে আনিয়া তোমার সামাজ্যে বসিধান করি।  
 ইহা বলিয়া চৌকিদার আপন গৃহে বাইরা এই সমস্ত কথা বড় পুত্রকে  
 অবগত করিলেন। এমনকর সেই পুত্র সম্মিলিতক জানী টকাই তনিয়া  
 উত্তর করিল যে রাজা যে ব্রহ্মান অতি বিচারক ও প্রজাপালক সৈন্য  
 চন্দ্রবর্ধী যদি আমাকে বসিধান করিলে তিনি রক্ষা পান এ বড়  
 উত্তম প্রকরণ কেন না আমার মরণেতে ক্ষতি নাহি এ রাজার মন্দ  
 ছইলে আর কোন দুর্ঘটন ঘটি রাজা হইবেন আমার ছইতাত্তে সহস্র ২  
 লোক নাপ হইরা দেশ শুষ্কবাণ হইবেক রাজা তেব্রহ্মান বাচিলে  
 সহস্র ২ প্রজাগোদেবসিগের শ্রুৎ এবং দেশের আবাদ হইবেক ও আমি  
 শিক্ষাগুরু স্থানে তনিয়াছি তিনি এক দিবস চৌবাটার পুত্রপারদিগকে  
 কহিতেছিলেন যে রাজগনভিয্যাক্ত ও নোকেরা যদি বিচারক রাজার  
 ঐশ্বর রক্ষার্থে এক জন প্রজাসে নষ্ট করে টকাই পাপ হয় না। ঐশ্বর  
 করেন যে এমত রাজা না করেন আর বিচারক রাজা রাজ্য না করে  
 অতএব নীচ আমাকে ঐশ্বর নিকট লইয়া যাও এবং ছেদন কর  
 তারপর চৌকিদার প্রতিমার সামাজ্যে পুত্রকে আনিয়া হস্তপাদি বন্ধন  
 করিয়া তীক্ষ্ণ ছোরা আপন করে লইয়া হেটনুও হইরা ছেদন করিতে  
 উদ্যত হইল। প্রতিবিষ ইহা দেখিয়া নীচ চৌকিদারের হস্ত ধরিয়া  
 নিবেশ করিলেন যে তুমি তোমার পুত্রের পলা ছেদন করিও না ঐশ্বর  
 সর্বকর্তা তোমার যোগ্যতা আর উত্তমতাতে বড় ভুট্ট হইরা অগ্রগ্রহ করিয়া  
 আমাকে দিবিয়া বসিধত বঙ্গের পাকিতে আত্মা দিলেন। চৌকিদার  
 এই মঙ্গল সমাচার তনিয়া বড় আশ্চর্য হইল। চৌকিদারে আর  
 প্রতিমাত্তে এবং চৌকিদারের পুত্রেরে যে কলোপকথন হইরাছিল রাজা  
 সেই সমস্ত তনিয়া এবং দেখিয়া চৌকিদারের আগমনের পূর্বে গৃহে  
 আনিয়া অট্টালিকার উপর পূর্ববৎ স্রমণ করিতে লাগিলেন।

চৌকিদার অর্দ্ধরাত্রে রাজার সম্মুখে আনিয়া উপস্থিত হইরা প্রণাম  
 করিয়া মঙ্গল প্রার্থনা করিল যে মহারাজার আয়ু ও ঐশ্বর্য এবং রাজ্য

আব মৈন্যেব বুদ্ধি হউক। তাবপব বাজা জিজ্ঞাসিগেন ওহে চৌকিদাব কহ শব্দেব বৃত্তান্ত বি জানিলা। চৌকিদাব কহিলেক মহাবাজ শ্রবণ কবিতো আজ্ঞা হউক। এক স্ত্রী সৰ্বদাসুন্দরী আপন স্বামিব সহিত কলহ কবিয়া বাটী হইতে বাহিবে আসিবা পথনধ্যে বসিবা ননোহুঃখেতে শব্দ কবিতোছিল যে আমি যাইতেছি এনত কোন ব্যক্তি আছে আনাকে কিবাইবে। আমি সেই স্ত্রীৰ সাক্ষাতে পঁছছিয়া কোনক বাক্য দাবাব তুমিহা তাহাবদেব স্ত্রীপুরুষে মিলন কবিয়া দিলাম এখন সেই স্ত্রী স্বীকৃত হইলেন যে আমি স্বামিব বাটী হইতে আব বর্টিশত বৎসর আব বোখাও যাইব না। বাজা চৌকিদাবেব উত্তর দাবাতে আব জ্ঞানেতে তুষ্ট হইবা কহিলেন ওহে চৌকিদাব যে কালে তুমি আনাব বাটীৰ বাহিব হইলা সেই সময় আমিও তোমাব পশ্চাৎ গমন কবিয়া দুব হইতে তোমাব আব প্রতিদাব এবং তোমাব তনয়েব উত্তর প্রত্যুত্তর শুনিয়াছি আব তোমাবা যাহা কবিয়াছিল তাহাও দেখিয়াছি ঈশ্বর তোমাব ভাণ কবিবেন এবং আমিও ভগবানেব প্রার্থনাব দ্বাবা তোমাব দৈন্য দুব কবিব ও ধনবান কবিব। তাবপব বাজা বাজসিংহাসনে উপবিষ্ট হইলে দেশেব প্রধানেরা ও সকল বিচাবেকবাও হাজীব হইলেন। এই সময় বাজা তাহাবদেব সাক্ষাতে চৌকিদাবেকে প্রধান মন্ত্রী ও ধনভাণ্ডারিব কর্মে নিযুক্ত কবিয়া চাবি ও কুণ্ডল সকল তাহাকে সমর্পণ কবিলেন।

তোতা তেববন্তান বাজাব এই কথা সাক্ষ কবিলেই বাত্রি প্রভাত ও পূর্য্য উদয় হইল এ কাবণ সেই দিবস খোজেস্তাব যাওন হইল না। খোজেস্তা সমস্ত বজনী এই ইতিহাস শ্রবণে জাগ্রত ছিলেন অতএব মথমলেব বিছানাতে শয়ন কবিলেন। <sup>1</sup>

As in the case of most of the Bengali writers of this period, nothing practically is known about the life of the author of *Rājā Kṛṣṇachandira Rāyer Chantira*<sup>2</sup> except that in the description of the book given by

Rājib lochan Mukho  
pādhyāy

<sup>1</sup> তোতা ইতিহাস, pp. 21-29

<sup>2</sup> The title page says, *History of Raja Krishnu Chundru Roy*

Buchanan<sup>1</sup> Rājib-lochan is said to have been 'descended from the family of the Raja' The

Rāja Kṛṣṇachandra  
Rājer Chandra 1806.

book is supposed to be an authentic account of the Rājā dead not many

years before this book was published and his correspondence with the English in the early period of their intercourse with Bengal but it seems that the memoir

its historical value is more of a tissue of fables and traditionary tales and much of the

narrative, especially at the beginning, is mere fiction such as tradition or the fancy of the writer might have suggested. We do not go so far as to suggest that these tales were invented as Dr Yates<sup>2</sup> remarks in order to

বঙ্গদেশে ককচন্দ্র রাজ্যে চরিত্র। এইসকল রাজীবলোচন মুন্সীগঞ্জের ইতিহাস।  
ককচন্দ্র মহারাজ বঙ্গের রাজ বাহার অধিকারে মনোনিবেশ সমাজ। পূর্ববর্তী  
বহু করিয়া অসংখ্য ককচন্দ্র চরিত্র গল্পে করিয়া বিস্তার। এইরূপের ছাণী  
হইল। ১৮৫৭ | pp 1 120 Long says that it was reprinted in London 1830  
but the second reprint at Śrīrāmpur bears the date of 1857 (Śābitya  
Paripat Library) There is a copy in the Library of the Board of Exa-  
miners which is reprinted at Śrīrāmpur bearing the date of 1834; and  
two copies in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Cat logue*  
p. 89) printed in London in 1811 Also mentioned in the *Cat logue*  
*f the Library of the East India College* (1843) and *Catalogue of the*  
*Library of the Honble East India Company* (1845) p. 106. There are  
copies of the first edition of this work in the Library of the Board of  
Examiners and also in the Bengal Asiatic Society Library In the  
paper on Bengali Literature (*Cat. Rev* xiii. 1850) Long gives this work  
the absurd date of 1801 and following him, Rāmānandī Nyāyaratna  
repeats the error See, however Roebuck *op cit* App. II p. 20 so  
Bacha *op cit* p. 228. Besides this work of Rājib-lochan's contains a  
reference at p. 9 to Rām Rām Basu's *Pratāpāditya-charitra* and must  
therefore have been published after 1801

*Op cit* p. 228 The full description is this an original work in  
the Bengali language containing the correspondence between the Raja  
and the English in the early period of their intercourse with Bengal  
by Rājiblochan Moonshee descended from the family of the Raja

*Intro t Beng Lang* vol. II p. 124. Seton Karr's severity on his  
work (*Cat Rev* 1849 p. 501) following Yates, seems to be unwarranted.

gain the favour of the English ", but we must admit that it shows more leaning towards gossip than *Pratāpāditya-*

Its language

*charitra* does In point of language, however, the last-named work com-

pares very unfavourably with the work under review Mahāmahopādhyāy Haṭṭaprasād groups this work with *Pratāpāditya* in the class of "unreadables" for its language, but the plain story-telling style, occasionally Sanscritised and wholly free from Persian, eminently befits the gossipy tendency of the work The story is enlivened

and manner

by frequent introduction of descriptions, dialogues, letters and anecdotes,

and the narrative towards the end, describing the Rājā's acquaintance with the Nawāb, his joining the conspiracy, his negotiations with the English, and the ultimate triumph of his party with the defeat of the Nawāb is told in a connected and interesting manner, with a large infusion, however, of fiction which may not be strictly acceptable to the historian But it is this mingling of fact and gossip that makes the work so interesting to the general reader The work begins with a preliminary account, legendary and historical, of pedigrees and ancestries, then narrates the story of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandīa's birth, his marriage, his religious work, a description of his residence called *Śiba-māṭāsa*, his amusements, his acquaintances with Nawāb Sūāj, his joining a conspiracy started by MīrJā'far and others against the Nawāb, his delegation to the English at

A description of the work

Calcutta by the conspirators, his negotiations there with the *Bada-sāheb* of the Factory, flight of Rāj-

ballabh and his son, correspondence between the Nawāb and the English, the Nawāb's descent upon Calcutta, agreement with MīrJā'far, the meeting of the English and

the Mohammedan forces at Plassey, flight of Siraj and his assassination by Miran and then the story ends with a short account of the posterity of the Rājā. We give here an extract from the passage describing the Rājā's joining the conspiracy which will serve as a specimen of both its language and manner.

রাজা [কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র] বাগার আসিয়া মহারাজা মহেন্দ্র ও রাজা রামনারায়ণ ও রাজা রামবরম ও এবং অগস্ত্যসেট ও মীরজাফরালি খাঁ ইহাদিগের নিকট মনুষ্য প্রেরিত করিলেন আদি সাক্ষাৎ করিতে বাইবসকলেই অতৃপ্তি করিলেন রাজে আসিতে কহিও ক্রমে ২ রাজা সকলের নিকট রাজে পয়ন করিয়া আত্মনিবেদন করিলেন। পরে অগস্ত্যসেট কহিলেন এ দেশের অত্যন্ত অপ্রতুল হইল দেশাধিকারী অতিশয় ক্রোধে বাক্য তেন না দিন ২ দৌরাখ্য অধিক হইতেছে অতএব সকলে একবাক্যতা হইয়া বিবেচনা না করিলে কাহাঙ্ক নিকৃতি নাই এই কথার পর রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায় কহিলেন আপনারা রাজধানের কর্তী আমরা আপনকার দিগের মতাবলম্বী যেমন ২ কহিবেন সেইরূপ কার্য করিব ইহাই তুমি অগস্ত্যসেট কহিলেন অদ্য বাসার বাটন আমি মহারাজা মহেন্দ্রের গহিত পরামর্শ করিয়া নিকৃতি একখানে বসিয়া আপনকারে ডাকাইব সে দিবস বিহার হইয়া রাজা বাগার আনিবেন। পরে এক দিবস অগস্ত্যসেটের বাটীতে রাজা মহেন্দ্র প্রেরিত সকলে বসিয়া রাজা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র রায়কে আহ্বান করিলেন দূত আসিয়া রাজাকে লইয়া সেল বখাযোগ্য স্থানে সকলে বসিলেন। ক্রমে পরে রাজা রামনারায়ণ প্রেরণ করিলেন আপনারা সকলেই বিবেচনা করুন দেশাধিকারী অতিশয় দুঃখ উদ্ভব ২ দৌরাখ্যের বৃদ্ধি হইতেছে অতএব কি করা যায় এই কথার পর মহারাজা মহেন্দ্র কহিলেন আমরা গুরুবাক্যক্রমে নবাবের চাকর যদি আমাদিগের হইতে কোন ক্ষতি নবাব নাহেবেই হয় তবে অধর্ম এবং অধ্যাত্ম অতএব আমি কোন মন্ব কর্মের মধ্যে থাকিব না তবে বেপূর্বে এক আদ্য বাক্য কহিয়া ছিলাম সে বড় উদ্বা প্রবুদ্ধ এইক্ষণে বিবেচনা করিলাম এসব



কার্য্য ভাষা নয় এই কথাব পব বাচ্চা বাননাবানন ও বাচ্চা বাচ্চবনভ এবং জগৎসট ও নীবজাবানি থা বহিগেন অন্যপি আপনি এ পরানর্শ ঠেতে ক্ষান্ত হইলেন বি ঠ দেশ বদা পান না এবং ভদ্র গোকেব জাতি প্রাণ থাবা ভাব হইয়া। অনেক অনেক রূপ বহিতে নর্হাবাচ্চা নর্হেৎ বহিলেন তোমবা বি প্রকাব ববিনা তখন বাচ্চা বাননাবানন বহিলেন পূর্কে এ কথাব প্রস্তাপ এক দিবস হইয়াছিল তাহাতে সবলে কহিয়া- ছিলেন বাচ্চা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায় অতি বড নয়া ঠাহাকে আনাইন ডিজাসা কবা যাউক তিনি বলেন ১ পবানর্শ দিবেন নেইমত কার্য্য ববিন এখন বাচ্চা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায় এই নাক্ষাতে আছেন ইহাকে ডিজাসা বরণ যে যে পবানর্শ কহেন তাহাই এবং কবিনা যে হয় পশ্চাৎ কবিবেন। ইহাব পব বাচ্চা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায়বে সকলে ডিজাসা ববিলেন তুনি সবলি জাত হইয়াছ এখন কি বওব্য। বাচ্চা কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায় হাস্য কবিনা নিবেদন কবিলেন নর্হাশয়েবা একগেই প্রবান নম্রব্য আপনবাবা আনাকে অন্তনতি কবিতেছেন পবানর্শ দিতে এ বড আশ্চর্য্য সে যে হউক আনি নিবেদন কবি তাহা শ্রবণ কখন আনাবদিগেব দেশানিকাবী বিনি ইনি জবন ইহাব দোবান্যাকনে আপনাবা ব্যস্ত হইয়া উপান্যতব চিত্তা কবিতেছেন। সনভিব্যাহত নীবজাবানি থা সাহেব ইনিও জাতে জবন অতএব আনাব আশ্চর্য্য বোধ হইতেছে। এই কথাব পব সকলে হাস্য কবিনা কহিলেন হাঁ ইনি জবন বটেন কিও ইহাব প্রকৃতি অতি উত্তম আপনি ইহাঁকে নন্দেহ কবিবেন না পশ্চাৎ কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায় নিবেদন কবিলেন এ দেশেব উপব বুদ্ধি ঈশ্ববেব নিগ্রহ হইয়াছে নতুবা এক কালীন এত হব না প্রথম যিনি দেশাধিকাবী ইহাঁব সর্কদা পবানিষ্ট চিত্তা এবং যেখানে শুনেন স্তম্ভবী স্ত্রী আছে তাহা বলকনে গ্রহণ কবেন এবং কিঞ্চিৎ অপবাধে জাতি প্রাণ নষ্ট করেন দ্বিতীয় বর্গী আসিয়া দেশ লুট কবে তাহাতে মনোযোগ নাই তৃতীয় সন্ন্যাসী আসিয়া যাহাব উত্তম বব দেখে তাহাই ভাঙ্গিয়া কাষ্ট কবে তাহা কেহ নিবাবণ কবে না অশেষ প্রকাব এ দেশে উৎপাত হইয়াছে অতএব দেশেব কর্ত্তা জবন থাকিলে কাহাক ধর্ম্ম থাকিবে না এবং জাতিও থাকিবে না অতএব ঈশ্ববেব নিগ্রহ না হইলে এত

উৎপাত হইয়া আসি এ কারণ অনেক ২ বিশিষ্ট লোককে বহিরাছি তোমরা সকলে ঐক্যেই আত্মাধনা বিশিষ্টরূপে কর যেন আর উৎপাত না হয় এবং জবন অধিকারী না থাকে আর ২ জাতি ধর্ম রক্ষা পায় এইরূপ ব্যবহার আমি সর্বদাই করিতেছি অতএব নিবেদন করি ঐক্য সৃষ্টি করিয়াছেন নষ্ট করিবেন না কিন্তু এক প্রমাণ আছে আমি নিবেদন করি যদি সকলেই পরামর্শ সিদ্ধ হয় তবে তাহার চেষ্টা পাইতে পারি। তখন সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন কি পরামর্শ কর রাজা কক্ষান্ত্র রায় করিলেন সকলে মনোযোগ করিয়া শ্রবণ করুন। এ দেশের অধিকারী সর্গপ্রকারে উত্তম হন এবং অন্য জাতি ও এতদেশীয় না হন ওইই মঙ্গল হয়। অগতঃই প্রকৃতি করিলেন এমন কে তাহা বিভাগিরা কর রাজা করিলেন বিভাগে বিভাগ আত্মে ইন্দ্রিয় কলিকাতার কোঠি করিয়া আছেন যদি তাঁহারা এ রাজ্যের রাজা হন তবে সকল মঙ্গল হইবে। ইহা শুনিয়া সকলেই করিলেন তাঁহাদেরিগের কি ২ শুণ আছে রাজা কক্ষান্ত্র রায় করিলেন তাঁহাদেরিগের শুণ এই ২ সকল মতাবাদী জিহ্বাশ্রিত পরহিংসা ক্রোধ না বোঝা অতি বড় প্রজা অতি বর্ণেই দ্বন্দ্ব এবং অত্যন্ত কন্যাগম বৃদ্ধিতে বৃহস্পতির ন্যায় বনেতে কুবেস তুল্য বার্ষিক এবং অশুভের ন্যায় পরাক্রম প্রজাপালনে সাক্ষ্য বৃদ্ধির এবং সকলে ঐক্যপ্রাপ্ত নির্ভর পালন চেষ্টার হমন রাজার সকল শুণ তাঁহাদেরিগের আছে অতএব যদি তাঁহারা এ দেশ্যধিকারী হন তবে সকলের নিজের নতুবা অথবা সকল নষ্ট করিবেক। এই কথার পর অগতঃই করিলেন তাঁহারা উত্তম বটেন তাহা আমি জ্ঞাত আছি কিন্তু তাঁহাদেরিগের বাক্য আমরাও বুঝিতে পারি না ও আমাদেরিগের বাক্য তাঁহারাও বুঝিতে পারেন না ইহার পর রাজা কক্ষান্ত্র রায় করিলেন এখন তাঁহারা কলিকাতার কোঠি করিয়া বাণিজ্য করিতেছেন সেই কলিকাতার দক্ষিণে কালীঘাট নামে এক স্থান আছে তাহাতে কালীঠাকুরাণী আছেন আমি মধ্যে ২ কালী পূজার কারণ দিয়া থাকি সেট কালে কলিকাতার কোঠির যিনি বড় সাক্ষ্য তাঁহাও সহিত সাক্ষ্য করিয়া থাকি ইহাতেই তাঁহারা চরিত্র আমি সমস্তই জ্ঞাত আছি। এই কথার পর রাজা রায়

নাবাগণ কহিলেন আপনি নান্য ২ বলিবাতার কোঠি বড় সাহেবেব সঙ্গে সাক্ষাৎ কবেন কিন্তু তাহাব বাক্য নি প্রকারে আপনি বুঝেন আব আপনকার কথা তিনি বা বি প্রকারে জ্ঞাত হন। এই কথাব উত্তর বাণী কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায় কহিলেন বলিবাতার অনেক ২ বিশিষ্ট জোকেব বসতি আছে তাঁহাবা সকলে ঈদ্বাদী ভাবা অভ্যাস কবিদাছেন। এবং সেঠ সকল বিশিষ্ট নান্য সাহেবেব চাকর আছেন তাঁহাবাষ্ট বৃন্দাইনা দেন। ইহা শুনিয়া সকলে বহিলেন ঈদ্বাবা দেশেব বস্ত্রী এইণে সকল বঙ্গা পান অতএব আপনি বলিবাতার গনন কবিদা যে সকল কথা উপস্থিত এইল এই সকল বৃত্তান্ত কোঠি বড় সাহেবেব নিকট জ্ঞাত ববাইবা তিনি যেনন ২ কহেন বিভাবিত আনাবদেব বহিবা এবং তিনি প্রতিজ্ঞা কবিলেন তাঁহাবা দেশাধিকারী হইণে আনাবদিগেব এ বাজ্যেব প্রভুল ববিবেন আব এখন যে ২ কার্য আনাবদিগেব আছে ইহাতেই বাধিবেন। এই কথাব পবে বাজী কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায় কহিলেন তাঁহাবা দেশাধিকারী হইবেন বাজ্যেব প্রভুল বাখিলেই বাজ্যাব প্রভুল হন আনাবদেব এ কথা বহনে আবশ্যক নাই তবে যে কথা কহিলেন আপনাব দিগেব যে যে কার্য আছে ইহাতে নিযুক্ত বাখিবেন তাহাব কোন সন্দেহ নহাশযেবা কবিলেন না তাঁহাবদিগেব বাজ্য হইণেই স্থখী নবল লোক হইবেব কি ঐ আপনাবা আনাকে নিতান্ত স্থিব কবিদা আজ্ঞা কবন। পবে সকলেই কহিলেন এই স্থিব হইল আপনি কলিকাতায় গনন কবন ইহা বলিবা বাজী কৃষ্ণচন্দ্র বায়কে বিদায় কবিদা নবণে স্ব স্ব স্থানে প্রস্থান ববিলেন।

The name of Mṛtyuñjaya Bidyālakār, for many years the chief Pundit of the College of Fort William and for some time Carey's own Munsī, whom Home has immortalised in Carey's portrait<sup>1</sup>, is an important one in the literary history of this period. Nothing practically is known about his life, but he is said to have

<sup>1</sup> A likeness of this will be found in William's *Scrampore Letters* (1800-1816). It may be remarked here that Mṛtyuñjaya's

been born in 1762 at Midnapore (then included in Orissa) and educated at Natore. In physique and knowledge, he has been compared to Dr Johnson and he was held in high and deserved estimation. In the English preface to *Prabodh-chandrikā* which was edited in 1838 after

Mṛtyunjay's death Marshman

Marshman's tribute eulogises the learned pundit as one of the most profound scholars of the

age. At the head of the establishment of Pandits Marshman writes elsewhere<sup>1</sup> stood Mṛtyunjov who although a native of Orissa,<sup>2</sup> usually regarded as the Boetia of the country was a colossus of literature.<sup>3</sup> He bore a strong resemblance to our great lexicographer not only by his stupendous acquirements and the soundness of his critical judgments but also in his rough features and his unwieldy figure. His knowledge of the Sanscrit

title was *Bhāṭṭa* and not *Tārī* as mentioned by Dinesh Chandra Sen in *History* (p. 888). See Roebuck p. cit App II p. 29 also Smith p. cit p. 170.

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Mṛtyunjay seems to have been as proficient in the Odia dialect as in Bengali. It was his help that enabled Carey to translate the Scriptures into the Odia dialect. (Smith, p. cit p. 190)

In this connexion M. M. Haraprasād Ghosh in the lecture referred to before speaks of Mṛtyunjay as an Odia but it might be noted here that although born in a province of Orissa it is very doubtful whether Mṛtyunjay was really an Odia. From the edition of his work *Baṭṭa* published in 1880 by a person calling himself the writer's grandson it seems that he belonged to the *Bhaṭṭopādhyāy* class of Bengali Brahmins for the title-page of the aforesaid edition says:—“একাদশ শতাব্দীতে জন্মগ্রহণ করিয়াছিলেন ঐশ্বর্য্যবান ব্রাহ্মণের পুত্র।” (Works Panini Office Report, p. 848) calls Mṛtyunjay a *Bhaṭṭachāryya* and his controversy with the Pandit is styled by himself as *ভট্টাচার্য্যের সহিত বিবাদ*. Mṛtyunjay was a *Madhya* Brahman (মাধ্যম ব্রাহ্মণ).

classics was unrivalled, and his Bengali composition has never been superseded for ease, simplicity and vigour.

Mr Carey sat under his instruction two or three hours daily while in Calcutta, and the effect of this intercourse was speedily visible in the superior accuracy and purity of his translations"<sup>1</sup> He was specially attached to Carey and it was at Carey's suggestion that he undertook the literary works which constitute his chief contribution to Bengali literature and language.<sup>2</sup>

The literary labours of Mrtyuñjay, embracing almost the whole of this decade (1802-1813), consist, besides a Defence of Idolatry and a treatise on the Hindu Law of Inheritance<sup>3</sup>, of the following four publications, of which

<sup>1</sup> Carey never, however, was influenced by Mrtyuñjay's pompous, affected, Sanscritised language. His native instinct for realism saved him from this extreme.

<sup>2</sup> Mrtyuñjay was also one of the jurists of the Supreme Court, and when the agitation about *Sati* was at its height and the whole body of law pundits wrote of it as "permitted," Mrtyuñjay gave his opinion that, according to Hinduism, a life of mortification rather self immolation was the law for a widow.

<sup>3</sup> Rev J Long, *Return of the Names and Writings of 515 Persons connected with Bengali Literature* (1855), p. 135. This work, *Defence of Idolatry*, as mentioned by Long, seems to have been the same as the *Bedānta Chandrikā* against which Rām mohan Rāy wrote his *উদ্ভাসিত মত* (1817) and his English tract "A Second Defence of the Monotheistical System of the Veds in Reply to an Apology for the present State of Hindu Worship" (1817). Says Miss Colclough "Another defendant of Hinduism appeared some months later in the Head Pundit of the Government College at Calcutta, Mrityunjay Vidyalankar, who published a tract called *Vedānta Chandrikā*" (*Life and Letters of Rāy Rammohan Roy*, p. 23. See also Nagendranāth Chatterji, *Life of Rām mohan Rāy in Bengali*, p. 103). The *Bedānta Chandrikā* was printed both in Bengali and in English, and defended the current form of idolatrous Hinduism against Rām mohan's party. It shows

two are original works and two translations from Sanskrit —

1 *Batris Sindhāsana* 1802

2 *Hitopadeś* 1808 2nd Ed 1814 3rd Ed 1821

3 *Rajābali* 1808

4 *Prabodh Chandrika* 1813

*Batris Sindhāsana* is a close translation in plain simple Bengali of a very popular and well known Sanskrit work which is some times supposed to be of Buddhistic

Translations  
origin sometimes attributed to no less a writer than

*Batris Sindhāsana.* Kalidāsa ! The title literally means means the *thirty-two thrones* but it should be rather the *thirty-two images of Bikramāditya* —

all the scholarship and sincerity of an orthodox pundit but at the same time it is marked by a deplorable tone of violence and personal rancour

The first edition (which is in the Imperial Library Calcutta) bears the following title page: বঙ্গিণী সিংহাসন। সপ্তদ্বীপ। দ্বিতীয় পর্ব।  
দ্বিতীয়। দ্বিতীয়পুস্তক। দ্বিতীয়। ১৮২। pp 210 The copy in the British Museum Library bears the following title page: বঙ্গিণী সিংহাসন।  
দ্বিতীয় পর্ব। দ্বিতীয়। ১৮২। Roobuk ) cit having apparently seen this edition gives 1808 as the date of its first publication; and this has been the usual date given by those who follow him (e.g. Log Rāmgarī Nyāyaratna &c) But Buchanan, p. 11 1800 mentions this publication at p. 222 though he gives no exact date. The title-page of the London reprint says *দ্বিতীয়পুস্তক। বঙ্গিণী সিংহাসন। সপ্তদ্বীপ। দ্বিতীয় পর্ব। দ্বিতীয়। দ্বিতীয়পুস্তক। দ্বিতীয়। ১৮১৩।* The edition in the Library of the Board of Examiners (London reprint) also bears 1810 as the date of publication. The Bahadur reprint is from the latter edition but some alterations in spelling &c. make the book less valuable than the student Simla remarks apply to its edition of *Prabodh Chandrika* and *Rajābali*. There was a Srirampur reprint in 1818, as is evident from the entry in the *Catalogue of the Calcutta Publ. Library* (1808) and another reprint as late as 1834 as the copy in the *Bahitya Parishat Library* and entry in the *Catalogue of Bengali*

*throne*<sup>1</sup> Each of these images is introduced as telling a story descriptive of the princely character of that King, and showing that a prince worthy of succeeding him cannot be found. The earlier style of Mrtyuñjaya, as displayed in this work, is not superior to that of some of his contemporaries, was certainly less affected and pedantic than his later style, although somewhat Sanscritised. It presents a great contrast indeed in language and manner at once to Carey's *Dialogues* as well as to *Pratāpāditya-charitra* published only a year before itself and *Lipimālā* published in the same year. As on the one hand, it is marked by a total absence of Persian influence and a decided tendency to Sanscritised style, so on the other, by its preference of the classical language, it rises superior to the colloquialism and flatness of the *Dialogues*. The story with its framework is well-known. When Bikramāditya dies, his throne, the precious gift of India who was pleased with the King's excellent qualities, is buried, and for a long time remains hidden. Many years afterwards, a peasant cultivating his land discovers that, when sitting on a platform in the midst of his field, he becomes endowed with the qualities of great discernment and decision. By the direction of Bhoja, the reigning monarch of the country, the ground is dug up, and the lost throne is duly discovered underneath the platform. When the king, in the midst of a large circle of courtiers is about to take his seat there, the first image informs him, that without Bikramāditya's qualities,

*Printed Books in the British Museum show* (p. 67). The London ed. of 1834 is also mentioned in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*.

<sup>1</sup> It is also sometimes known as *Bikramacharitra*, because King Bikrama is the hero, tales of whose prowess and virtue are told by the thirty-two images of his charmed throne discovered by Bhoja.

he is unworthy to occupy Bikramaditya's throne. Explanation ensues and a story is told by each one of the thirty two images in succession illustrative of the former king's great and good qualities and implying that a worthy successor to him has not yet been born amongst the sons of men. It is one of the most interesting collections of fables of this period<sup>1</sup> and the following extract from the beginning relating to the finding and disposing of the magic throne will serve as a specimen of its descriptive and narrative manner—

দৈবলৌকিকোক্তর সামর্থ্য সম্পন্ন শ্রীবিজ্ঞানাদিত্য নামে এক রাজাবিরাজ  
হইরাছিলেন। দেবপ্রসাদলব্ধ স্বামিংশে পুণ্ডলিকাবৃক্ষ বক্রময় এক সিংহাসন

The opening passage  
on the Discovery of  
the Throne of old

তাহার বসিবার ছিল। ঐ শ্রীবিজ্ঞানাদিত্য  
রাজাব্যবসায়বোধ পরে সেই সিংহাসনে বসিবার  
উপযুক্ত পাত্র কেহ না থাকিতে সিংহাসন

স্বত্বকার মধ্যে প্রোথিত হইরাছিল। কিছু কাল পরে শ্রীভোজপ্রভাব  
অধিকারের সময়ে ঐ সিংহাসন প্রকাশ ঘটিল। তাহার উপাখ্যানের  
সিদ্ধান্ত এই।—

দক্ষিণ দেশে দ্বারা নামে এক পুরী ছিল সেই নগরের নিকটে  
লক্ষদ্বীপ নামে এক লক্ষ্যক্ষেত্র থাকে তাহার চত্বকের নাম বক্রমণ্ড।  
সেই চত্বক লক্ষ্যক্ষেত্রের চতুর্দিকে পৰিধা করিয়া শাল তাল তমাল  
গিহাল হিঙাল বকুল আম্র আম্রাণ্ডক চন্দ্রক অশোক কিন্তক বক শুভাক  
নারিকেল নারকেলের মাধবী মাগধী বুটী জাভী সেণ্টী কমলী দাড়িমী তগর  
কুম্ভমরিকা দেবদারু প্রভৃতি নানান জাতীর বৃক্ষ বোষণ করিয়া এক উদ্যান  
করিয়া আপনি সেই উদ্যানের মধ্যে থাকেন। সেই উপবনের নিকট  
নিবন্ধ (নিবিদ্ধ) ভয়ানক বন ছিল সে বন হঠাৎ হস্তী ব্যাঘ্র মহিষ গাশুর  
বানর বনশুকর পশু ভালুক হরিণ আদি অনেক পশু জন্তু আসিয়া সম্য নষ্ট  
প্রত্যক্ষ করে। এমনকি বক্রমণ্ড অত্যন্ত উদ্বিগ্ন হইয়া লক্ষ্যদ্বীপের কারণ ক্ষেত্রের

<sup>1</sup> Yates gives no less than 14 stories from this book in his collection and Haughton gives 4



মধ্যে এক নক্ষ কবিয়া আপনি তথাতে থাকিবা নাঞ্চব উপবে নতঙ্গ  
 বসিয়া থাকে তৎপব বাজাদিবাডেব দেহত প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও নতঙ্গ  
 নেইনত প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও নতঙ্গা ক্রমব ববে নতন নক্ষ হইতে নাদে  
 তখন ভাঙেব প্রায় থাকি (পাবে)। ইহা দেগিয়া ক্রমবব পবিজন শোবেবা  
 নঙে নিম্নিত হইয়া পবম্পব বহে এ বি আশ্চর্য্য। এই বৃত্তান্ত (বৃত্তান্ত)  
 লোকপবম্পবাত ধাবাপূৰ্বাব বাজা ভোজ শুনিবেন। অনন্তব বাজা  
 কোতুকাবিষ্ট হইয়া নশি মানস সৈন্ত সেনাপতিব সশিত নক্ষেব নিবটে গিতা  
 ক্রমবেব ব্যবহব (ব্যবহার) প্রত্যঙ্গ দেগিয়া আপনবাব অত্যন্ত বিখ্যাসপাত্ত  
 এক নক্ষিকে নক্ষেব উপবে বসাইবেন। সেই নষ্টী নাবত নক্ষেব উপবে  
 থাকে তাবত বাজাদিবাডেব প্রায় প্রতাপ ও শাসন ও নতঙ্গা ববে। ইহা  
 দেগিয়া বাজা চমৎকৃত হইয়া বিচাব ববিণেন যে এ শক্তি নক্ষেব নন  
 এবং ক্রমবেবো নয় এবং নক্ষিব নন বিস্ত এ স্থানেব নব্যে চমৎবাব  
 কোনহ বস্ত (বস্ত) আছেন তাহাবি শক্তিতে ক্রমবে বাজাদিবাডপ্রায় হন।  
 ইহা নিশ্চয় কবিয়া ক্রমবেব উদ্ধাব কাবণ সেই স্থান খনন কবিতে  
 মহা বাজা আজ্ঞা দিলেন। আজ্ঞা পাইয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেবা খনন কবিল  
 তৎপব সেই স্থান হইতে প্রবল (প্রবাল) মুক্তা মানিক্য হীৰক সূর্য্যকান্ত  
 চন্দ্রকান্ত নীলকান্ত পদ্মবাগ মনিগণেতে জড়িত বজ্রিশ পুতুলিকাতে শোভিত  
 তেজোময় এক দিব্য বহুসিংহাসন উঠিলেন। সেই সিংহাসনেব তেজে  
 বাজা ও বাজাব পবিজন লোকেবা সিংহাসন প্রতি অবলোকন কবিতে  
 পাবিলেন না। তৎপব বাজা হৃষ্টচিত্ত হইয়া আপনাব বাজধানীতে  
 সিংহাসন আনয়নেব ইচ্ছা কবিয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেব দিগে আজ্ঞা কবিলেন।  
 আজ্ঞা পাইয়া ভৃত্যবর্গেবা (বর্গেবা) সিংহাসন চালন কাবণ অনেক যত্ন  
 কবিল সে স্থান হইতে সিংহাসন লড়িল না। তৎপব আকাশবাণী হইল যে  
 হে বাজা নানাবিধ বস্ত অলঙ্কার আদি উপকবণ দিযা এ সিংহাসনেব পূজা  
 বলিদান হোম কব তবে সিংহাসন উঠিবে তাহা শুনিয়া বাজা সেইকপ  
 কবাতে সিংহাসন অনায়াসে উঠিলেন।

তৎপব ধাবানামে নিজ বাজধানীতে সিংহাসন আনিয়া স্বৰ্ণকপ্য  
 প্রবাল ক্ষটিকময় শুভতে শোভিত বাজসভা স্থানেব মধ্যে স্থাপিত

কবিলেন। পূর্ব রাজা সেই সিংহাসনে বসিত ইচ্ছা করিয়া পণ্ডিত-  
লোকেরদিগকে আনাইয়া ভূতক্ষণ নিরুপণ করিয়া ধূলাবর্গেরদিগকে  
অস্তিত্বক সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিতে আজ্ঞা করিলেন। ধূলাবর্গেরা আজ্ঞা  
পাইয়া যদি ভূর্ণ চন্দন পুষ্প অগোর সুন্দর গোমোচনা ছত্র তরাস চামর  
নব্ব্বগুচ্ছ অরুণ পতিপুষ্পতা স্ত্রীগণন ২৫৫০ বর্ণনাদি অধিবাস সামগ্রী  
সমুদ্বাণা পৃথিবীর চিত্তে চিত্রিত এক ব্যাঘ্র চর্ম এই সকল পাত্রে  
বালাশিবেক সামগ্রী আয়োজন করিয়া বালাব নিকটে নিবনন করিল।  
তৎপব ঐশোমরাজা তৎ পুরোহিত প্রতি ব্রাহ্মণ পণ্ডিতবগ মস্ত্র সামন্ত  
সৈন্য সেনাপতিতে বেষ্টিত হইয়া সিংহাসনে বসিয়া অতিদিক্ত হবার নিমিত্তে  
সিংহাসন নর নিকটে উপস্থিত হইলেন ইত্যবসারে (ইত্যবসরে) সিংহাসনের  
প্রথম পুস্তলিকা রাজাকে কহিতে লাগিলেন। হে রাজা তন বে রাজা  
গণবান অত্যন্ত বনবান অশ্বিন পাতা ৫৩৩৩ বহালু অতিবড় পূর দাবিক  
বহান সলা উৎসাহ দা প্রবল প্রভাপ হন সেট রাজা এট সিংহাসনে  
বসিবার যোগ্য অস্ত্র স্যাক্ত রাজা উপযুক্ত নয়। টা গুনিয়া রাজা  
কহিলেন হে পুস্তলিকা আমি যাচঞা মায়ে উপযুক্ত পাত্র বুঝিয়া সার্ক লক্ষ  
সুবর্ণ দি অতএব আমা হইতে দাবিক (দাবিক) পাতা পৃথিবীতে অস্ত্র কে  
দাছে। টা গুনিয়া পুস্তলিকা উপহাস করিয়া (করিয়া) কহিলেন। হে রাজা  
তন বে লোক মহত ছয় সে আপনার গুণ আপনি বর্ণনা করে না কুমি  
আপন গুণ আপনি ব্যাখ্যা করিলে ইহাতেই বুঝিলাম কুমি অতি ক্ষুদ্র।

Mityūñjay's next work of translation was that of

*Hitopades* The Sanscrit *Hitopades*  
than which there might be greater

books in the world but none perhaps which has a more  
interesting literary history seems to have with strange  
prescience gauged the literary or amusive require-  
ments not only of its own but also of times to follow  
and consequently it seems to have always possessed a  
peculiar fascination for a host of translators of all periods

of literary history There are some half a dozen or more translations of this work between 1800 and 1850, and it is not necessary to bring under review all of them But this version being the work of Mrtyuñjay possesses a peculiar interest of its own Long gives 1801 as the date of its publication but from internal evidence of

Its date language and manner it seems that the date is a too early one We have

not been able to obtain sight of the first edition in order to verify the date <sup>1</sup> but the work seems to have been composed later than as Golak-nāth *Hitopadeś* and exemplifies Mrtyuñjay's earlier

Its language and style compared to those of Golak nāth style It would be interesting to compare Golak-nāth's language as shown in the specimen quoted at p 183 *et seq* with that

<sup>1</sup> The copy I use is a third reprint at Sīnāmpur (1814) and bears the following title page পঞ্চতন্ত্র প্রভৃতি নীতিশাস্ত্র হইতে উদ্ধৃত। মিলনাত্মক সহজবোধ্য বিবরণ সহিত। এতদ্ব্যতীত যাবৎ বিশিষ্ট হিতোপদেশ। বিজ্ঞানশাস্ত্র কর্তৃক সংগৃহীত। বাঙ্গালা ভাষাতে। যত্নাঙ্কিত শব্দগণা ক্রিয়ত। শ্রীবামপুরে তৃতীয় বার ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৪। pp 1-146 I have not been able to get the first edition of this work The copy in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p 67 and p 115) of the second edition bears 1814 as the date of publication 3rd Ed 1821 It would appear from Dinesh Chandra Sen, *Banga Sāhitya Parichay* or *Selection from Bengali Literature*, pt II (1914) p 1727, that the first edition was published in 1801 But this is incorrect, this is the date of the first edition of Golak nāth's *Hitopades* There is mention of a "Hitopadeshu in Bengali 8vo Serampore 1808" in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College* But in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon East India Company*, we find an entry of "Hitopadeshu or Salutory Instructions 8vo Serampore 1808" without any mention of the name of the author and of an edition apparently of Golak nāth's earlier *Hitopades* (1801) From the Tenth Memoir, relative to Serampore translation (Appendix), it is clear that the first edition of Mrtyuñjay's *Hitopades* was published in 1808, and therefore the anonymous entry in the *Catalogue of the East India College* above noted must refer to this work

of Miranujai in the following extract bearing upon the same part of the story :

পুস্তকাবলি বিপুলনাশক নিমিত্ত প্রথমত প্রাচীনগ্রন্থ সমলোচন  
করিতেছেন।

তালবার সেগবেদার দ্বারা চন্দ্রনাথ দীক্ষিত মহাশয় আছেন সে  
শিবের অত্যাচারে সাধুলোকের বিশেষ লাভ করি সিক্ত হউক।

অসংখ্য এই হিন্দোপাধি টাকি সংগ্রহত থাকে। পটুতা ও সর্পদ  
বাক্যের বৈচিত্র্য ও নীতিবিজ্ঞা দেন। প্রাক্ত লোক অল্পর ও অধর্মের  
দ্বারা হইয়া বিশা এবং অর্থ চিন্তা করিলেক। আশ বনকটক কেশে  
পুলীতের মত হইয়া দর্শনাচরণ করিলেক। আশ সকল প্রযোজ্য নথ্যে  
নিম্নাট অত্যন্তম প্রণয় ইদা পতিত্বা করিয়াছেন ৫৫৩৭ বিজ্ঞান সর্প  
কালে চৌধুরি কর্তৃক অক্ষয়দ্বিগুহ ও অনুদ্যায় ও অক্ষয়র। আর বিজ্ঞা  
গরি নীচ লোকের চর ত্রাণ সেই মধ্যমাকে চন্দ্রাণ্য বাচাকে পাওয়ান।  
যেমন নীচনা নীচী চন্দ্রাণ্য অনুদ্যায় পাওয়ান বাচাব সঙ্গে মেলন হইতুক  
বিজ্ঞা উৎকৃষ্ট ভাণ্য পাওয়ান। বিশা বিনয় সেন বিনয়েতে পাত্রতা পার  
পাত্রতা হইতে পন পার ধন হইলে ধর্ম পার ধর্ম হইলে স্বপ পার। শত্রু বিজ্ঞা  
ও শত্রু বিজ্ঞা এই দুই বিজ্ঞা প্রতিপত্তির নিমিত্তে হন সিক্ত আচ্ছা শত্রুবিজ্ঞা  
বৃদ্ধাবহা। চান্দোব নিমিত্তে চর দ্বিতীয় শত্রুবিজ্ঞা দর্শকালে অধর্মদ্বিগুহ  
হন অপর বেহেতুল নুতন পাত্রে স লয় যে চিল সে অস্ত্রপা হয় না সেই  
৫৫৩৭ শত্রুর ভল্লতে বালাকর ১৭৫৫ এ আছে নীতি কথা বাইতেছে  
মিত্রলাভ ও ১৭৫৬ ও বিগ্রহ ও সন্ধি এতচ্চতুর্ভাষিক নীতিশাস্ত্র পঞ্চতর  
হইলে ও আর ২ গ্রন্থ হইতে আকর্ষণ করিয়া লিখা বাইতেছে।—

ভাগীরথী ডায়ে পাটলিপুত্র নামে নগর আছে সেখানে সকল  
রাজগণে বৃদ্ধ স্বর্ধর্ম নামে রাজা ছিলেন সেই ভূপতি এক সময়  
কাহারও কর্তৃক পঠমান প্রোকরণ প্রবণ করিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই  
অনেক সন্তোষের কারণক এবং অপ্রত্যক্ষ বিবরের জাপক যে শত্রু সে  
সকলের চক্ষু টীকা বাহাব নাই সে অস্ত্র। আর যৌবন ও ধনসম্পত্তি ও

প্রভু ও অবিবেকতা এই চতুষ্টয় প্রত্যেকেও অনর্থক নিমিত্ত হয় যেখানে এ চতুষ্টয় সেখানে কি হয় কহিতে পারি না। ইহা শুনিয়া সে বাজা অজ্ঞাতশাস্ত্র এবং সৰ্বদা বিপথগামী আপন পুত্রেরদিগেব শাস্ত্র বিজ্ঞাপনার্থে উদ্বিগ্নচিত্ত হইয়া চিন্তা কবিলেন। যে পুত্র পণ্ডিত ও ধার্মিক নহ সে পুত্র হওয়াতে কি প্রয়োজন বহু অনর্থ হয় যেমন কাণচক্ষুতে কিছু প্রয়োজন নাই প্রত্যুত কাণচক্ষু কেবল পীড়াবি কাষণ। এবং অজ্ঞাত মৃত ও মূৰ্খ ইহাব মধ্যে আত্মদ্বয় ভাল অস্তিত্ব ভাল নয় যেহেতুক আত্মদ্বয় একবার ছঃখদায়ক হয় অস্তিত্ব পুনঃ পদে পদে ছঃখদায়ক হয়। অপব গৰ্ভপ্রাবণ্ড ভাল স্ত্রীঅভিগমন না কবাও ভাল জন্মিয়া মবাও ভাল কথা হওয়াও ভাল ভাৰ্য্যা বক্ষ্যা হওয়াও ভাল গৰ্ভ হইতে ভূমিষ্ঠ না হওয়াও ভাল রূপ ও ধনসমূহবিশিষ্ট মূৰ্খ পুত্র কিছু নয়। এবং যে পুত্র জন্মিলে বংশ উন্নতি পায় সে জন্মুক নতুবা জন্মনবণ ধৰ্ম্মশালি সংসাৰে কে মবিয়া না জন্মে। অপব গুণিসমূহ গণনাবশ্তে সম্রমেতে খড়ী বাহাব না পড়ে সে পুত্রেতে মাতা যদি পুত্রবতী হয় তবে কহ বক্ষ্যা কেমন হয়। এবং দান ও তপস্শ্রা ও শৌৰ্য্য ও বিদ্যা ও ধনার্জনেতে বাহাব মন সচেষ্ট না হব সে মাতাব বিষ্ঠা মাত্র। গুণবান এক পুত্রও ভাল শত শত মূৰ্খ পুত্রের প্রয়োজন নাই যেমন এক চন্দ্র অন্ধকাৰ নষ্ট কবেন তাবা নমূহ কিছু কবিতে পাৰে না। ইহা চিন্তা

কবিয়া বাজা পণ্ডিত সভা কবাইলেন অনন্তব বাজা কহিলেন ভো ভো পণ্ডিতেবা আগাব কথা শ্রবণ ককন। আছে কেহ এমন পণ্ডিত যে নিত্যবিপথগামী ও অবিদিতশাস্ত্র আনাব পুত্রেবদেব এখন নীতি শাস্ত্রোপদেশদ্বাবা পুনর্জন্ম কবাইতে সমর্থ হয়। যে হেতুক কাঞ্চন সংসর্গেতে কাঁচ যেমন মবকতেব ছাতি ধাবণ কবে তেমন পণ্ডিত সন্নিধানতে মূৰ্খও প্রবীণত্ব পায়। পণ্ডিতেবদেব কতৃক সে প্রকাৰ উক্ত হইয়াছে। হীন লোকেবদেব সহিত বাসেতে মতি হীনা হয় এবং স্বসমান লোকেবদেব সহিত বাসেতে মতি সমতাকে পায় এবং উত্তম লোকেবদেব সহিত বাসেতে মতি উত্তমতাকে পায়। ইহাব মধ্যে বৃহস্পতিতুল্য

সকল নীতিশাস্ত্রের বখাৰ্খজাতা বিকৃশৰ্খ নামে পণ্ডিত কহিলেন  
হে মহারাজ সংকুলোদ্ভব এই রাজপুত্রেরা এই হেতুক আমি হইতে  
নীতিশাস্ত্র গ্রহণ করিতে শক্ত হইবেন যেহেতুক কোন ক্রিয়া অর্ধানে  
পতিতা হইলে কলংগী হয় না যেমন নানাপ্রকার বস্ত্রেতে শুকশযিম  
জায় বক পাঠিত হয় না। আর এ পোত্রে নিগুণ সজান জন্মে না  
বেহেতুক পদ্মরাগমণির আকরেতে কাঁচমণির জন্ম কোথায় এই হেতুক  
আমি ছয় মাসের মধ্যে তোমার পুত্রেরদিগকে নীতিশাস্ত্র করিব।

রাজা পুনর্বার বিনয়পূৰ্ণক কহিলেন শুল্লসংবাসেতে কীটও শলোকের  
মন্তকে আরোহণ করে এবং শলোকেরদের কচুক পুত্রোতিষ্ঠিত প্রভরও  
শেষ হয়। আর যেমন উৎসাহলয় জ্বা সূর্যাসমিধানে দীপ্তি পায়  
তেমনি সংস্রবিবানেতে হীনবর্ণও দীপ্তি পায় সেই হেতুক এই আমার  
পুত্রেরদিগকে নীতিশাস্ত্রোপদেশের নিমিত্ত তোমারাই প্রমাণ হইরাছে। ইহা  
কহিয়া সেই বিকৃশৰ্খার বহুমানপূৰ্ণক পুত্রেরদিগকে সমর্পণ করিলেন।

From a literary point of view however Mrtyuñ  
jay's two original works *Rājabālī* and  
Original works. *Prabodh-chandrika* are more interest  
ing, and of these, *Rājabālī* both in form and matter,  
is no doubt the better work *Rājabālī*  
Rāj-bālī, 1808 as its name implies is the history of  
the Kings' who ruled in this country from the earliest  
time and its full title will sufficiently explain its scope' —

The description of this work in Dinah Chandra Sen's *History*  
(p. 888) as 'the history of India from the earliest time down to  
Timur' is clearly a mistake; for the history is brought down to  
recent times viz. the time of the British occupation of Bengal.  
The title-page given in the text above is that of later editions but in  
the first edition the title-page simply says :—রাজাবলী। সংগ্রহ ভাষ্যে।  
বৃদ্ধার শৰ্খা বিবৃত। শ্রীমৎপুত্রোদয়াইল। ১৮৮। pp. 1 296 Second Ed  
Serampore, 1814. Also mentioned as such in the catalogues of the  
Library of Bard of Franchère, Port William College; of the Library of  
the Hon. East India Company; of the Library of the East India College  
4th Ed. Serampore, 1830.

বাজাবদী। অর্থাৎ কলিষ প্রাবৃত্ত হইতে ইংবাজব অধিবাস পর্য্যন্ত ভাবতবর্ষের বাড়া ও সম্রাটদের সংশ্লেষ ইতিহাস। The work is, however, based more on tradition than on authentic history. The introductory portion gives the story of the ancient Hindu Kings since the days of Kuruksetra, based mostly on the Purāṇik accounts and traditional legends and of these the account of King Bikramāditya is the longest and most entertaining. The story comes down to the historic times of the

The scope of the work Mohammedan conquest and there is some account of Ādisūi, Ballāl Sen,

Laksman Sen of Bengal and Pithu and Jayachandria of Delhi and Kanauj. Then follows a sketch of the Pathan and Mogul kings of Delhi, and of these the stories of Akbar, Jahāngīr, Shāh Jahān and Aurangzeb will be found interesting. These accounts, however, are not strictly historical but there is a considerable infusion of gossip and fiction. The work ends with an account of the British occupation of Bengal after the defeat of Snājud-daulah, worth comparison with that given by Rājib Lochan in *Rājā Kṛṣṇa Chandra Rayer Charitra*. The concluding passage is interesting.

এইকপে নন্দবংশজাত বিশাবদ অবধি শাহজাহান বাদশাহ পর্য্যন্ত ও নুনইনখাঁ নবাব অবধি নবাব কাসমলী খাঁ পর্য্যন্ত কোন কোন সম্রাট বাজাবদেব ও নবাবেবদেব ও তাঁহাবদেব চাকব লোকাবেবদেব স্বামিজোহাদি নানাবিধ পাপেতে এই হিন্দুস্থানেব বিনাশোন্মুখ হওয়াতে পবনেশবেব ইচ্ছামতে ঐ হিন্দুস্থানের বঙ্গার্থ আবোপিত কম্পনি বাহাদুবেব অধিকাবরূপ বৃশেব পুষ্টিতত্ত্ব ও ফলিতত্বেব সমবধাবক যে বডসাহেব তৎকর্তৃক ঐ কম্পনি বাহাদুবেব অধিকাবরূপ বৃশেব আলবালগ্বে নিরূপিত পাঠশালাব পণ্ডিত শ্রীমত্ব্যজ্ঞম শর্ম্ম কতৃক গোড়ীর ভাষাতে বচিত্ত বাজতবঙ্গ নামে গ্রন্থ সমাপ্ত হইল। There are numerous anecdotes but the story is presented in a connected form and the style is marked

in narrative ease and simplicity although at places where the author grows serious, it becomes laboured and pedantic. The style of Mityushay however has a distinction of its own when contrasted with those of his contemporaries. It shows a decided leaning to Sanscrit words and Sanscritic forms just as the styles of Carey Rām Basu or Chandicharan show a return to the colloquial language. In Mityushay's writings there is an attempt to raise the language from the negligence of colloquialism to the dignity and seriousness of a literary language while in Carey and others the desire is always to be clear popular and useful. But it must be admitted that in the more serious portions of Mityushay's writings the preponderance of Sanscrit words and Sanscrit forms makes the syntax marlistic and the style stiff and unnatural. In the narrative portions however this fault disappears and the general manner in this work although bordering on the pedantic is indeed interesting of which the following short passage taken from the account of Pṛthu and Jayachandra will serve as a specimen' —

It is contrasted with the plain colloquial styles of Carey and others

পৃথুভাব পর বনেতে যে একায়ে বিনীতে অবিকার করিল তাহা  
লিখি।—

কাকতুল বেলেব রাজা অরাজ্য রাষ্ট্রের মহাবল পরাজিত ছিলেন  
এবং বড় ধনী ছিলেন কাহাকে বনেতে কাহাকে প্রীতিতে এইরূপে  
আসি কুনারিকা খণ্ডস্থ সকল রাজাকে আপন  
বন্দিত করিয়া ছিলেন তাঁহার অনসম্মত  
নামে অশূল অশুরী এক কন্যা ছিলেন তাঁহার  
বিবাহের নিমিত্তে যে যে বর উপস্থিত হই তাহারদের মধ্যে কেহ তাঁহার

An extract from  
the account of the  
hostility of Pṛthu  
and Jayachandra



মনোনীত হইল না। পবে বাজা এক দিবস উদ্বিগ্ন হইয়া কথাকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন যে আমি তোমার বিবাহেব নিমিত্তে যে বব উপস্থিত করি সে তোমার মনোনীত হয় না ইহাতে তোমার মনস্ত কি তাহা আমাকে কহ আমি তদন্তরূপ করি। রাজকন্যা এই কথা শুনিয়া কহিলেন হে মহাবাজ আপনি আমার কর্তা আপনকার যে মনস্ত তাহাই হইতে পাবে আমার মনস্তে কি কবে তবে আপন মনস্ত বাহা তাহা আজ্ঞানুসারে কহি আপনি সম্প্রতি অতি বড় রাজা বাহা ইচ্ছা করেন তাহাই কবিতো পাবেন আমি আপনকার কথা ইহাব এত বিবাহ হইলে বড় ভাল হয় ইহাতে আমি এই মনে কবিয়াছি আপনি এক রাজহুম বস্ত্র আবস্ত কখন তাহাতে একল রাজাবদেব নিমন্ত্রণ কখন তবে সকল রাজাবা অবশ্য আসিবেন সেই রাজাবদেব মধ্যে আপন মনোনীত যে রাজাকে দেখিব তাহাকে স্বয়ং বরণ করিব। রাজা কন্যাব এই বাক্য শুনিয়া রাজহুম যজ্ঞেব আবস্ত করিবা সকল রাজাবদেব নিমন্ত্রণ করিলেন। সে নিমন্ত্রণে কুমারিকাখণ্ডস্থ সকল রাজাবা আইলেন কিন্তু দিল্লীব পৃথুবাজাব আগমন কালে তাঁহার প্রাচীন এক চাকর তাঁহাকে কহিল হে মহাবাজ রাজহুম যজ্ঞেব নিমন্ত্রণে গেলে কবকাপে কিছু দিতে হয় আপনি দিল্লীব রাজা আপনি যে অন্য রাজাকে কিছু কব দেন সে ভাল নয় তবে শ্রীতিতে যজ্ঞসমাপনার্থে কিছু দিলেও লোকত অপ্রতিষ্ঠা হইবে অতএব এ নিমন্ত্রণে আপনকার যাওয়া উপযুক্ত নয়। রাজা এই কথাতে সে নিমন্ত্রণে আইলেন না। কান্যকুব্জের রাজা জয়চন্দ্র এই কথা শুনিতে পাইয়া অস্তঃকরণে অতি ক্রুদ্ধ হইলেন ও সভাস্থ পণ্ডিত লোকেবদিগকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন দিল্লীব রাজা আইলেন না যজ্ঞ সমাপন কিরূপে হয়। পণ্ডিতেবা কহিলেন রাজহুম যজ্ঞেব অঙ্গ রাজাবা হন অঙ্গের অভাবে প্রতিনিধিতেও প্রধান কর্ম সিদ্ধ হয় অতএব দিল্লীব রাজাব প্রতিনিধি এক স্বর্ণ প্রতিমা নিৰ্ম্মাণ করন পূর্বে সূর্য্যবংশীয় রামচন্দ্র নামে এক মহাবাজ হইয়াছিলেন তিনি নৈমিষারণ্যে বখন যজ্ঞেব আবস্ত কবিয়াছিলেন তাহাব পূর্ব্ব কিছু দিন কোনহ কাব-  
 গেতে আপন স্ত্রী সীতাকে বনবাস দিয়াছিলেন অতএব যজ্ঞ কালে

তাঁহার স্ত্রী ছিলেন না এই প্রযুক্ত বশিষ্ঠ তাবালি অতৃতি মহানুভব  
 যামচন্দ্রের স্ত্রীর প্রতিনিবন্ধে এক স্বর্ণপ্রতিমা নির্মাণ করাইয়া যজ্ঞ  
 করাইয়াছিলেন আপনিও নেইমত করুন যজ্ঞ আবৃত্ত করিয়া সমাপন  
 না করিলে বড়ই দোষ। রাজা পণ্ডিতেরদের এই বাক্যেও পৃথুর্দ্বার  
 প্রতিনিবন্ধে এক স্বর্ণপ্রতিমা করিয়া ঐ প্রতিমাকে ষাণ্মুখপে স্থাপন  
 করিলেন কেননা রাজ্যের যজ্ঞে নিযুক্ত যে যে রাজতাবা আসিয়া থাকেন  
 তাঁহারা উপযুক্ত নত কেহ কোনই কর্ম করিয়া থাকেন। অতঃপর  
 রাজা পৃথুর্দ্বার না আগাতে ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়াছিলেন অতএব তাঁহার  
 প্রতিমাকে অঙ্গপুঙ্খ কর্মে স্থাপন করিলেন। ইহা পৃথুর্দ্বার তনিতে  
 পাইয়া নৈশন্যে কান্যকুব্জ দেশে আসিয়া অতঃপর রাজার অনেক সৈন্য  
 নষ্ট করিয়া ঐ স্বর্ণপ্রতিমা লইয়া গেলেন। তদনন্তর রাজা অতঃপর  
 কোনই প্রকারে যজ্ঞ সমাপন করিয়া অত্যন্ত অপমানিত হইয়া রহিলেন।  
 এই প্রকারে পৃথুর্দ্বারকে বড় বলবান ও দ্বন্দ্ববান দেখিয়া রাজকন্যা  
 যে যে রাজারা আসিয়াছিল তাহাদেরের মধ্যে কাহারোও বরদ্বন্দ্ব না  
 করিয়া কহিলেন যে আমি পৃথুর্দ্বার ব্যতীত অন্য রাজাকে বরদ্বন্দ্ব  
 করিব না। অতঃপর রাজা আপন কস্তার এই নিষ্ঠুর জানিয়া কস্তার  
 উপর অত্যন্ত ক্রুদ্ধ হইয়া কন্যাকে আপন বাটী হইতে দূর করিয়া দিলেন  
 ও কহিলেন তোম বাছা ইচ্ছা তাড়াই কর গিয়া। রাজ কন্যা অন্য  
 কোনই অন্তরঙ্গ লোকের বাটীতে আসিয়া রহিলেন। এ সকল বিবর  
 পৃথুর্দ্বার তনিতে পাইয়া চন্দ্র নামে এক ভাটকে অতঃপর রাজার নিকটে  
 পাঠাইয়া দিলেন। ও এক পত্র লিখিলেন তাহার পাঠ এই হে মহারাজ  
 অতঃপর জোনাক কন্যা আমাকে বিবাহ করিতে মনস্থ করিয়াছেন তাঁহার  
 যে এ মনস্থ সে উপযুক্ত বটে কিন্তু তুমি যে ইহাতে তাঁহার প্রতি ক্রুদ্ধ  
 হইয়াছ সে অত্যন্ত অসুচিত করিয়াছ তোমার কন্যার মনস্থ অন্যথা  
 কখনও হইবে না ইহা নিষ্ঠুর জানিবা। এইরূপ পত্র দিয়া চন্দ্রভাটকে  
 পাঠাইয়া আপনিও সসৈন্যে কান্যকুব্জ দেশে প্রস্থান করিলেন চন্দ্রভাট  
 অতঃপর রাজার কাছে গিয়া সে পত্র দিলেন। কিন্তু অতঃপর রাজা সে পত্র  
 অদগত হইয়া কিছু উত্তর দিলেন না। পৃথুর্দ্বার চন্দ্রভাটের প্রমুখ্য

ইহা জ্ঞাত হইয়া আপন যোগ্যতায় রাজবন্দীকে নষ্টনা দ্বিত্বাৎ প্রস্থান  
ববিশেন। পৃথ্বাজীব সৈন্য দল বনোচ্চতে থাকিল পশ্চাৎ ভগবৎ  
বাজা ইহা শুনিতে গাইয়া সৈন্য আনিয়া পৃথ্বাজীব সৈন্যের সতি  
বড় যুদ্ধ ববিশেন। এক দক্ষ ছই দিগেতে ৭০০০ সাত হাজার লোক  
নষ্ট হইল। ভগবৎ বাজা আপনাব অনেক লোক নষ্ট হওয়াতে গুরু  
হইতে বিবত হইয়া প্রস্থান ববিশেন। পৃথ্বাজীব অবশিষ্ট সৈন্য দ্বিত্বাৎ  
আনিয়া পৌছিল। এইরূপে পৃথ্বাজীব ও ভগবৎ বাজাব বড় যুদ্ধ  
হইল।

*Prabodh-chandrikā*<sup>1</sup> or Moon-light of Intelligence, his  
next great original work, is indeed  
*Prabodh chandrikā*, a most interesting publication of this  
1813 period from the standpoint of form  
and language, if not for its matter. It is an elaborate treatise

<sup>1</sup> This work, though composed in 1813, was not published till 1833, when it appeared from the Serampore Press with a Preface by J C Marshman (dated 15th May, 1833). The title page says — “প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা। শ্রীমত্মজ্ঞান বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্তৃক বেট্‌উইলিয়াম কালেন্জেব ছাত্রেরদেব নিবিত্ত বচিত। শ্রীবানেশ্বর মুদ্রাযন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৮৩৩। pp 1--195. The *Prabodh Chandrika* compiled by the late Mrityunjay Vidyalunkar, many years Chief Pandit in the College of Fort William, From the Serampore Press 1833”, pp 1 xi and 1—195. The font is very neat and clear. There was a second edition at Serampore in 1845 as the *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the Library of the British Museum* p 67 shows. Another edition in the Sāhitya Parishat Library dated 1862, Serampore. Also another edition 1862, with the following title page in English and Bengali: “The Prabodh Chandrika, compiled by the Late Mrityunjay Bidyalankar for many years Chief Pandit in the College of Fort William, Calcutta, Printed for the Calcutta University at the Baptist Mission Press, 1862. প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা। শ্রীমত মত্মজ্ঞান বিদ্যালঙ্কার কর্তৃক বিরচিত। কলিকাতা ইউনিবর্সিটি অব ইণ্ডিয়ায় ব্যাপটিষ্ট মিশন যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। শকাব্দ ১৭৮৪।” “All these editions may be seen to the Sāhitya Parishat Library. Entered as “Prabodh Chandrika by Mrityunjay Vidyalunkar, 8vo Serampore, 1833” in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon. East India Company*, 1845 p 195.

of some length divided into four parts called *ভূক* each of which again is subdivided into chapters called *কুসুম*. The book begins with the praise of language which however as quoted below, will not be found very entertaining for its stiff and pedantic style but will somewhat exemplify and explain the Pundit's preference for Sanscrit —

Object and scope of the work as put forth in an introductory passage

entertaining for its stiff and pedantic style but will somewhat exemplify and explain the Pundit's preference for Sanscrit —

অকারাদি ককারাত্মকমহালা যত্বে পঞ্চাশং সংখ্যক কিম্বা এক পঞ্চাশং কিম্বা সপ্তপঞ্চাশং সংখ্যা পরিমিতা হউক তথাপি এতাব্যাদ্য কতিপয় বর্ণাবলীবিদ্যাগবিশেষবশত বৈদিক লৌকিক সংস্কৃত প্রাকৃত পৈশাচাদি অষ্টাশয় ভাষা ও নানাদেশীয় বহুভাষা আতীত ভাষা-বিশেষবশত অনেক প্রকার ভাষাবৈচিত্র্য শাস্ত্রোক্ত লোকত প্রসিদ্ধ আছে। যেমন কুম্ভব ধ্বনি তুল্যধ্বনি নিবাদ যম। শোষণাদিকাবি শব্দ যম। অম্বাশব্দ সদৃশ গাছায় যম। মধুসংবাদিক বড়ল যম। চৌকবনোদম মধ্যম যম। অশ্ববনলকশ বৈবত যম। কুম্ভমধ্যম কালীন কোকিলকাকীকুলিত পঞ্চম যম ইত্যাদি সপ্তমাদ্য সংখ্যক যম সংস্থানবিশেষবশত অসংখ্যাত গানবৈচিত্র্য শাস্ত্রোক্ত লোকত প্রসিদ্ধ আছে। এতদ্ব্যপ্তি প্রসিদ্ধ নরীভাষা চতুর্কুহরশা হন।

অনতিব্যঞ্জবর্ণা ধ্বনিবৈচিত্র্য পরানাদী ভাষা প্রথমা যেমন অশ্বিনব কুম্ভাঘেরসের ভাষা। তদনন্তর অতিব্যঞ্জ বর্ণমাত্রা পঞ্চতীনামক ভাষা দ্বিতীয়া যেমন প্রাপ্তবৎকিঞ্চিৎকর বালকবাণী। তৎপরে পদমাত্রাশ্রয় মধ্যমা ত্রিভাষা তৃতীয়া ভাষা যেমন পূর্ণোক্তবালকাদিক কিঞ্চিৎকর শিত ভাষা। তারপর বাক্যশ্রয় বৈবরী নানবেগী সকলপ্রাচীনপা বিবিধজ্ঞানপ্রকাশিকা নরীব্যবহার প্রবর্তিকা চতুর্থী ভাষা যেমন লৌকিক শাস্ত্রীয় ভাষা। ঐহিকরূপে জাতমাত্র বালকের উদ্ভবোক্তর বয়োবৃদ্ধিক্রমে ক্রমশ প্রবর্তমান চতুর্কুহরশা ভাষা অম্বাদিতে যুগ্মশব্দপ্রবর্তমানকালে যত্বে অতীতমান হউন তথাপি পূর্ণোক্ত পরা পঞ্চতী মধ্যমা বৈবরীশ্রয় চতুর্কুহরশেই প্রবর্তমান হউন।

ইহাব প্রমাণ এই। দ্ব্যবর্তি হট্টগামি লোকেবদেব শ্রবণবিধয়ীভূত হট্টাগতধ্বনিমাত্রাখক কেবল কোলাহল হব। অনন্তব কতিপয় পথ-গমনোত্তব সননক শ্রবণেন্দ্রিয় সন্নির্কর্ষবশতঃ খণ্ডশঃ বর্ণ মাত্র গ্রহণ হব। তত্ত্বত্তব বসন ভূষণ কদলীমূলক ইত্যাদি পদমাত্র শ্রবণ হয়। তদনন্তব হট্টনিকট প্রাপ্ত্যন্তুব ঞ্জবিঞবকাবি পুকবেবদেব বাক্যশ্রুতি হয়। অতএব অঙ্গদাদিভাষা চতুর্দ্বীপে প্রবর্তমানভাষাখহেতুক পূর্বোক্ত-ঞম হট্টহ পুঞ্চভাষাব ন্যাব ইত্যন্তমানে সকল মানুষ ভাষাব চতুর্দ্বীপ-রূপত্ব নিশ্চয় হয়। তবে যে অঙ্গদাদিব ভাষাব যুগপৎ বৈখবীকপতামাত্র প্রতীতি সে উচ্চারণ ঞ্জিব অতিনীব্রতাপ্রযুক্ত উপধ্যবোভাবাবস্থিত কোমলতব বহুল কনলদল স্চীবেধন ঞ্জিব মত। এতঞপে প্রবর্তমান সকল ভাষাহইতে সংস্কৃত ভাষা উত্তমা বহুবর্ণনয়প্রযুক্ত একদ্যক্ষব পশুপক্ষিভাষাহইতে বহুতবাক্ষব মনুষ্য ভাষাব মত ইত্যন্তমানে সংস্কৃত ভাষা সর্বোত্তমা এই নিশ্চব। অত্রাং দেশীয় ভাষাহইতে গৌড়দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তমা সর্বোত্তমা সংস্কৃত ভাষা বাহ্যাহেতুক। যেমন দুই এক পণ্ডিতাধিষ্ঠিত দেশহইতে বহুতব পণ্ডিতাধিষ্ঠিত দেশ উত্তম ইত্যন্তমানে সকল লৌকিক ভাষাব মধ্যে উত্তম গৌড়ীয় ভাষাতে অভিনব যুবক সাহেবজাতেব শিক্ষার্থে কোন পণ্ডিত প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা নামে গ্রন্থ বচিত্তেছেন। ইতি প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকায়াং মুখবন্ধে ভাষা প্রসংশা নাম প্রথমকুস্তমং।<sup>1</sup>

Then King Baijpāl, son of Bikramāditya, summons his young and frolicsome child Śrīdharmadhara before him and, in order to infuse in the son a love of learning, begins a discussion on the subject. Afterwards he entrusts the instruction of his son to Āchārya Prabhākara, who to educate his young pupil begins by lecturing to him in a stiff and laboured language upon every conceivable subject beginning with the philosophy

The framework of the treatise

of the alphabet rules of grammar rhetoric law logic astronomy and politics and various other branches of useful knowledge and finishing the whole by salutary instructions illustrated by popular tales. The book is indeed a monument of learning and written also in a learned language.

But the book in spite of its learning has no system and the writer is almost wholly devoid of all artistic instincts of proportion or arrangement. The serious is mingled up with the comic abstruse metaphysical speculation is put side by side with the low talk of peasants mechanics and quarrelsome women and often there is a sudden and ludicrous descent from the most pedantic and laboured language to the extreme vulgarity of the popular dialect. It is indeed a hotch potch—a curious collection of tales and serious essays bound together by a very slender thread.

Nor is the language of the book all that could be desired. In the preface to the work Marshman remarks very significantly that "any person who can comprehend the present work and enter into the spirit of its beauties may justly consider himself master of the language." But to comprehend the present work would mean some familiarity with Sanscrit without which the book would not be easily intelligible and there can be no doubt that this grounding in Sanscrit would certainly help much in acquiring a command over the more literary aspects of the language. But the tendency to Sanscritising has been carried to the extreme.

Indeed *Prabodh-chaṇḍīkā* exemplifies one important aspect of the development of prose style in this period and brings into clear relief the long continued struggle between the plain and the ornate style.

Want of system and arrangement.

Its language.

Its importance and position in the historic development of prose style.

out of which is evolved modern prose the plain style favoured by the European writers and their imitators, while the ornate style advocated by learned pundits of the

Purity of diction orthodox school like Mrtyuñjay  
The language is correct and absolute-

ly free from the taint of Persian, and Maishman's eulogy that the book is "written in the purest Bengalee" is perfectly justifiable, but when that learned missionary and scholar speaks of its Bengali as "one of the most beautiful specimens" of prose style, it is obvious that he stretches his point too far. The harsh unrhythmical obscure Sanscrit-ridden style is far from the best that this period has to show in Bengali prose. The genius of Sanscrit is not the same as that of Bengali and it would be a mistake to suppose that Sanscrit syntax should rule syntax

The style labour- in Bengali. Preponderance of Sanscrit  
ed and pedantic for words indeed gives strength and  
its close imitation of variety to the prose as well as purity  
Sanskrit and correctness to the diction, but

the sesquipedalian affectation of laboured style becomes wearisome in a short time. The use of long-drawn-out

Its defects compound words, occurrence of unusual  
phrases, and extensive borrowing from

Sanskrit make it difficult sometimes for the uninitiated to comprehend the sentences at the first glance. In the technical or philosophical portions again the style sometimes assumes a peculiar stiffness and learned tone.<sup>1</sup> In some places, the sentences are so very lengthy and irregular in structure and arrangement that it becomes almost impossible to find out their meaning easily, while in other places, the writer, anxious to exhibit a variety of style, has

<sup>1</sup> See for instance প্রথম ওষক, তৃতীয় ও চতুর্থ কুন্ডল। দ্বিতীয় ওষক, প্রথম কুন্ডল।

indulged in the use of language current only among the lower orders the vulgarity of which however says Marshman "he has abundantly redeemed by his vein of original humour" In this work the student may range at will over

all kinds of Bengali prose of this period from the highest to the lowest, although the Sanscritised style preponderates from sentences so studded with Sanscrit combinations as to be almost unintelligible to those who have not learnt the classical language down to vulgar abuse and colloquial freedom We had already seen a specimen of its more difficult style the following extract will be a good illustration of the author's use of the colloquial language' —

বাটীর নিকটে নিয়া [ বিশ্ব বন্ধক ] আপন জীকে ডাকিল ও ১৮৭৭  
মা গুরে দোড়িয়া শীঘ্র আর মাগা হইতে তার নামা আজি এক ব্যাটাকে  
বড় ঠকাইরাছি। তারার স্ত্রী পতিক্রিয়া কহিল ওগো আমি বাইতে  
পারিবো না আমার হাত বোকা আছে। তৎপতি বিশ্ববন্ধক আগরে  
আসিয়া জীকে কহিল আর এই নে আজি বড় মজা হইয়াছে দীবা সার শুক  
এক কুপা পাওয়া গিয়াছে এক বেটা লক্ষ্মীছাড়া আপন এই শুক খেলাইয়া  
আনার সেই বিষয় বড়া জানিন্তো তাহা নিয়া অমনি প্রহান করিয়াছে  
মনে মনে বড় হর্ষ হইয়াছে যে আজি যথেষ্ট ঘৃত পাইলাম পশ্চাত্তের  
পাইবে বা নীর মাথাবাড়া কর আমি নাটাই আজিরাছি জুবাতে পেট  
অলিওছে। জী কহিল শুক হইলেই কি মাথা হয় তেল নাই লুন নাই  
চাউল নাট ওরকারিপাতি কিছুই নাট কাঠজলা সকলি ভিন্না বেনাতি  
বা কিরূপে হবে তাতে আবার বোছু ডি অতুচ্ছ হইয়াছে কুটনা বা কে  
কুড়িবে বাটনা বা কে বাটবে। তৎপতি কহিল আজি কি ঘরে কিছুই  
নাই দেখলেনি বুঝকুড়া যদি কিছু থাকে তবে তাব গিঠা কর এই শুক  
দিয়া পাইব। ইত্যতে তাহার জী কহিল বটে গিঠা করা বুঝি বড় সোকা



জান না পিঠা আঠা বেনন আঠা লাগিল শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না তেননি পিঠাব  
লেঠা বড় লেঠা শীঘ্র ছাড়ে না বখনোতো বাঁবিয়া থাও নাই আব  
লোকেবদেব মাউগেব মতন মাউগ পাউগ থাকিতে তবে জানিতে ।

ইহা শুনিয়া বিশ্ববন্ধক কহিল তবে কি আজি পাওয়া হবে না স্বেয়ায়  
কি নবিন । তৎপত্নী বহিন নব বন্যানে আজি বি পিঠা না থাইলিই নব  
দেগিদেগি হাড়ীকুঁড়ো খুদকুঁড়া যদি কিছু থাকে । ইহা কহিয়া যব  
হইতে খুদকুঁড়া আনিয়া বাটিতে বসিয়া কহিয়া শীলটা ভাল বটে লোডাটা  
যা ইচ্ছা তা এতে বি চিবণ বাটনা হয় নরক বেনন হউক বাটিত । ইহা  
কহিয়া খুদকুঁড়া বাটিয়া কহিল বাটাতো একপ্রকার হইল আনুনি পিঠা  
থাইবা না লুন তেন আনিতে হইবে । গতিক্রিয়াব এই কথা শুনিয়া  
বিশ্ববন্ধক কহিল ওবে বাছা ঠক তৈল লবণ বোথা হইতে গোছেগাছে  
কিছু আন । ইহা শুনিয়া ঠকনানে তৎপুত্র কোন পড়সীব এক  
ছালিয়ারকে আয় আনাব সঙ্গে তোকে মোষা দিব এইরূপে ভুলাইয়া সঙ্গে  
লইয়া বাজাবে গিয়া এক সুদিব দোকানে ঐ বালককে বন্ধক রাখিয়া তৈল  
লবণ লইয়া যবে আইল । তৎপিতা জিজ্ঞাসিল কিরূপে তৈল লবণ আনিল  
ঠক কহিল এক ছোঁড়াকে ভুলাইয়া বন্ধক দিয়া সুদিশালাকে ঠকিয়া  
আনিলাম ইহা শুনিয়া তৎপিতা কহিল হাঁ মোষ বাছা এই তো বটে না  
হবে কেন আনাব পুত্র ভাল অন্ন কবিয়া থাইতে পারিবে । এইরূপে  
পুত্রের ধন্যবাদ কবিয়া ভার্য্যাকে কহিল ওলো মাগি যা যা শীঘ্র পিঠা  
কবিগা ক্ষুধাতে বাঁচি না ।

It will be seen, however, that his narrative and  
descriptive manner as well as his power of weaving dialogues  
into his story is really praiseworthy for his time. But  
it must not be supposed that between these extremes of  
colloquialism on the one hand and  
academic pedantry on the other,  
Mrtuñjaya never succeeded in steering  
a middle course. On the contrary,  
from the following extract it will be seen that his narrative

His general narra-  
tive manner ease  
and dignity

style though manuscripted often assumes an ease and  
 Illustration dignity reminding one of the later  
 style of Balyasgar' —

দশুকারণ্যে প্রাচীনদীপ্তিযে বহুকালাগমি এক তপস্বী তপস্বী কয়েন  
 বিবিধ কৃচ্ছ্রসাহ্য তপ করিয়াও তপঃসিদ্ধিভাগী হন না। দৈবাৎ ঐ  
 তপোবনের তপোবনেতে এক দিবস নারদমুনি আসিয়া উপস্থিত হইলেন।  
 ঐ তপস্বী বহুমান পুরসসর পাণ্ডার্য্যাসন দান ও দ্বাগত প্রদ কথিয়া  
 নারদমুনিকে নিবেদন করিলেন। হে ঐশ্বরদর্শি মুনি বহুকালাগতীত  
 হঠল আমি তপস্বী করিতেছি তপ সিদ্ধি হয় না কতকালে আমার তপ  
 সিদ্ধি হইবে ইহা আপনি ঐশ্বরসমীপে আসিয়া আমাকে আজ্ঞা  
 করিবেন। তাপসের এই বাক্য শুনিয়া নারদমুনি ঐশ্বরসমীপে  
 গিয়া তাহার কথা নিবেদন করিলেন। ঐশ্বর আজ্ঞা করিলেন  
 ঐ তাপসের তপোবনোপকর্ষে যে অতিবৃহৎ তিত্তিকী বৃক্ষ আছে সে  
 বৃক্ষের বস্তু পত্র শুভ শত বৎসরে তার তপস্বীসিদ্ধি হইবে। ঐশ্বরের এই  
 আজ্ঞা নারদ শুনিয়া ঐ তপোবনকে কহিলেন তপোবন শুনিবামাএ  
 পরমাঙ্গাদে উচ্চবাহু হইয়া নৃত্য কবিতো লাগিলেন ও কহিলেন ভাল  
 কখনো হঠক আমার তপ সিদ্ধি হইবেতো তপস্বী এইরূপে অত্যন্ত  
 মর্জিতকরণ হইয়া নারদমুনিব নিকটে বসিয়া আছেন ইত্যাবলবে পরমেশ্বর  
 বরং ঐ তাপসের আগ্রহে আসিয়া তাহাকে দর্শন দিয়া কহিলেন। হে  
 তাপস অচ্ছ তোমার তপ সিদ্ধি হইল তাহার বিলম্বের কারণ যে সকল পাপ  
 ছিল তাহা তোমার নিষ্ঠার এতাদৃশী পরাকাষ্ঠাতে সঙ্কট হইয়া তোমাকে  
 ক্ষমা করিলাম এইরূপে ঐ তপস্বিকে তপঃসিদ্ধি বর প্রদান করিয়া  
 (কথিয়া) ঐশ্বর অত্রিহিত হইলেন। তদনন্তর নারদমুনি ঐ তপোবনকে  
 কহিলেন হে তপস্বি কাব্যসিদ্ধির কালেব কিছু ইয়ত্তা নাই কিন্তু পুণ্যবৎ  
 বিশ্বাসপূর্ব্বক আত্মাত্তিক নিষ্ঠাতে সঙ্কট পরমেশ্বরের প্রসাদ বধন হয়  
 তখন কাব্যসিদ্ধি হয় বৈষ বাবৎ থাকে তাবৎ পর্যন্ত কাব্যসিদ্ধি হইতে  
 পারে না।

The last though not the least important work of this period is *Purus-parīkṣā* or the Trial of Man composed by Haraprasād Rāy and published by the Śīrāmpur Press in 1815<sup>1</sup>. It is a pretty large volume and contains 52 stories<sup>2</sup> translated from a Sanskrit original said to have been composed by the poet Bidyūpati at the command of Rājā Śibasimha. Its object is not only to impart ethical instruction<sup>3</sup> by extolling and illustrating the virtues of men, but also to entertain by clever and amusing stories, and this is set forth at the beginning of the

<sup>1</sup> The title page says — শ্রীযুত বিদ্যাপতি পণ্ডিত কর্তৃক সংস্থত বাকে ন.গৃহীত। পুষ্করপ্রসাদ। ইন্দ্রপ্রসাদ বায় কর্তৃক বাঙ্গালী ভাষাতে বর্ণিত। শ্রীরামপুরে ছাপা হইল। ১৮১৫। pp 1-273. It is very remarkable that this book has been published by the Bangabāsī Press (B S 1301) as a work by Mṛtyuñjay Bidyūlankār. I am not aware of the existence of any such work by Mṛtyuñjay nor does Roebuck, Buchanan, or Long mention it. The Bangabāsī reprint, however, is not very accurate. Of Haraprasād Rāy's life, little seems to be known. Long (*Return of the Names and Writings, etc.*, 1855) speaks of him as "Haraprasad Ray of Kanchrapura." The copy in the British Museum Library (Blumhardt, *Catalogue*, p 113) of the first edition bears the same title page, date and place of publication as we have quoted above but there is also another edition in the same Library reprinted at London in 1826. And a third revised edition, Calcutta, possibly of 1866. Also in the *Catalogue of the Library of the Hon East India Company*, 1845, p 195, and in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*, the name of the author is not stated in these Catalogues. An edition dated Calcutta 1818 is entered in the *Catalogue of the Library of the East India College*, 1843. There are two editions (apparently of 1834 and 1853 respectively though the title page is wanting) in the Library of the Sāhitya Paṇṣat.

<sup>2</sup> Although there are stories in this work which would have better been expurgated

<sup>3</sup> As a book of fable, this work seems to have been very popular

work — দাঁড়নৰ প্ৰায়াসিষ্টে ষাণ/কবদিতোব নীশিক্ষায় নিমিত্তে এব  
কামকণাকৌতুক্যবিষ্টে পুৰস্কীৰ্ণেষে চৰ্বেষে নিনি/ও ত্ৰিশিবসিংচ ব্ৰাহ্মণ  
অভা/নায়ে বিজ্ঞাপতি নামে কবি এট এষ রচনা কবিত্তেচেন। এব  
এট প্ৰাৰ্থনা কৰিছে ছেন যে মনজ্ঞানবাবা নিৰ্গুনবৃদ্ধি যে পণ্ডিত সকল  
তাচাৰা নীতি বোধাশ্ৰবোধক যে এট সকল বা/কোব শুণ তন্নিনিমিত্তে কি  
আমাৰ রচিত এট এষ শ্ৰবণ কৰিবেন না অৰ্থাৎ অবশ্য শ্ৰবণ কৰিবেন।  
যে এষেৰ লক্ষণোক্ত পৰীক্ষাব দ্বাৰা পুৰষ সকলেৰ পৰিচয় হয় এবং  
যে এষেৰ কণা সকল লোকেৰ মনোবল্য হয় সেট পুৰষ পৰীক্ষা নামক  
পুস্তক রচনা লবা বাটেছে।'

The framework of the story is this. Once upon a time  
a certain king anxious to marry his beautiful daughter  
consulted a certain sage on the subject.

The framework of the collection. The sage advised him to marry his  
daughter to a man. Asked what  
the characteristics of a real man are the sage begins  
enumerating and illustrating the various virtues of a real  
man and the object of manhood. The book is comparable  
in many respects to Mityushay's *Batras Smukūsan* or  
*Pradokh-ekandrikū* and although not equally learned or  
affected the style shows the same  
tendency to sanctification and borders

almost on the pedantic. By taste and inclination Haraprasād seems to belong to the same orthodox school as Mityushay. It is hardly necessary to illustrate his style  
at a great length and the following short quotation picked  
out from the more easy portions will be found sufficient  
to enable the reader to form his own judgment —

Dr. Yates gives 10 stories from it the second volume of his *Introduction*  
and H. Vaughan gives 4

দুৰ্গেশ্বৰীয়া। pp. 3-4

অথ অলসকথা ।<sup>1</sup>

সকল কার্য্যেব উত্তোগেব যে হেতু সেই উৎসাহ তাহাকে জীবের ধর্ম্মবিশেষ কথা খায সেই উৎসাহহীন যে মনুষ্য সে অলস হয় তাহাব উদাহরণ এই ।

মিথিলা নগরীতে বীবেশ্বর নামে এক বাজমন্ত্রী থাকেন তিনি দান-শীল এবং অত্যন্ত দয়ালু সকল দুর্গত ও অনাথ লোকেবদিগেবে প্রতিদিন তাহাবদেব ইচ্ছামত আহাব দান কবেন কিন্তু ঐ সকলেব মধ্যে অলস লোকেবদিগেবে অন্ন এবং বস্ত্র দান কবেন । যে হেতুক অলস লোক জঠবা-ঘিতে ব্যাকুল হইয়াও আলস্যপ্রযুক্ত কোন কর্ম্ম কবিতে পাবে না অতএব অলস লোক সকল দুর্গতেব মধ্যে প্রধান গণিত হইয়াছে অথবা আলস্য পবম-

Illustrative extract  
from the story of the  
indolent men

সুখস্থান তদাশ্রিতরূপে খ্যাত যেহেতুক আলস্য-

মাত্রাবলম্বি পুরুষেব অক্ষুদ্র মন কোন বিষয়াকাঙ্ক্ষা

কবে না এবং সে স্বয়ং কোন অভিলষিত কর্ম্মে

শ্রমযুক্ত হয় না কেবল জঠবাঘি তাহাব নিদ্রাজাত সুখ নষ্ট কবে আমি এই বিবেচনা কবি । পবে অনেক লোভী লোক অলসেবদেব অভীষ্ট লাভ শুনিয়া সেখানে গিয়া অলসেবদিগেব সহিত থাকিল যে হেতুক স্বজাতীয়েব সহবাস সকলেব সুখকর হয় এবং স্বজাতীয়েব সুখ দেখিয়া কোন জীব সেখানে না যায় । পবে ধূর্তেবা অলসেবদেব সুখ দেখিয়া কৃত্রিম আলস্য প্রকাশ করিয়া সেখানে ভোজনদ্রব্য গ্রহণ কবিতে লাগিল । পশ্চাৎ নিয়োগি পুরুষেবা অলসশালাতে অনেক দ্রব্য ব্যয় জানিয়া এই পবামর্শ কবিল যে স্বামী অলসেবদিগকে অক্ষম জানিবা খাত্ত-দ্রব্য দেন কিন্তু অলস ভিন্ন অত্র অত্র লোকও কপট কবিয়া দ্রব্যগ্রহণ কবিতেছে সে আমাবদেব বুদ্ধিভ্রমপ্রযুক্ত অতএব কেবল আমাবদিগেব দোষেতেই প্রভুব ধন নষ্ট হইতেছে ইহাতে আমবা প্রত্যবায়ী হইব । অতএব সকল অলসেবদেব পরীক্ষা কবি এই পবামর্শ কবিয়া অলসেবা যে গৃহে শয়ন কবিয়াছিল সেই গৃহে অগ্নি দিয়া নিকটে থাকিল তখন সেই গৃহে শযিত ধূর্ত সকল গৃহেতে অতিশয় প্রজ্জলিতাঘ্নি দেখিয়া

<sup>1</sup> পুণ্ডরীকী, pp 55 58

হুবে শগারন করিল। অমলস পুঙ্খবোও শগারন করিল। প্রকৃত  
 অলস চারিজন সেখানে শয়ন করিয়া পরস্পর কথোপকথন করিতে  
 লাগিল এবং তাহারদের মধ্যে একজন বলিলে আপনি মূল চাকিয়া  
 কহিলেই শুধু জাই কি নিমিত্ত এই কোলাহল হইল। দ্বিতীয়  
 ব্যক্তি কহিল আমি অতঃপর করি যে এই গৃহে অগ্নি লাগিয়া থাকিবে।  
 তখন তৃতীয় অলস কহিলেই এখানে এমনত পার্থক্য লোক কেহ নাই  
 যে অগ্নি বস্ত্র কিবা অগ্নি শ্যাকরণক আমারদের শরীর আগুত করে।  
 চতুর্থ অলস ইহা তুমি কহিল শুধু বাচাল সকল মোহন কত  
 কথা কহিতে পার কি মৌনী হইয়া থাকিলেই পার না। পশ্চাৎ  
 নিরাগিপুঙ্খবো এই চারি অলসলোকের পরস্পরলাপ তুমি এহার  
 দিগের উপরে অগ্নিপতনের ভয়ে সেই চারি অলস লোকেরদের  
 কেশাকর্ষণ করিয়া এই গৃহের বাহিরে আনিবেন। অন্যত্র নিরোগি  
 পুঙ্খবো এক দোক পাঠ করিলেন তাহার অর্থ এই যেহেতু শ্রীলোকের  
 স্বামী গতি এবং শাণ করদিগের মননী প্রতি সেটরপ অলস লোকের  
 দিগের দয়ালু পুঙ্খবো প্রতি তুমি একে অস্ত গতি নাই। পরে সেই  
 নিরোগি পুঙ্খবো অলসদিগকে পূর্বা হইতে অগ্নি সামগ্রী দান করিতে  
 লাগিলেন। ইতি অলসকথা সমাপ্ত।

## CHAPTER VII

### EARLIEST BENGALI JOURNALISM

It will be seen that almost all the publications of the College of Fort William were printed and issued at the Śrīrāmpur Press <sup>1</sup> But a greater

Periodicals and  
Newspapers published  
by Śrīrāmpur Press,  
1818

work than this was accomplished by it and its missionary founders

when in 1818 Dr Marshman, in conjunction with Dr Carey, proposed and carried out a scheme of publishing a monthly journal and a newspaper in Bengali. Such a project had long been present in the minds of the Śrīrāmpur brethren, for the Press as a means of diffusing knowledge is always an important and useful auxiliary to an earnest missionary but stringent restrictions on the Press, especially the vernacular press, had made it difficult for them to carry out their noble purpose.

When therefore in February 1818, Dr Marshman proposed the publication of *Digdarśan*, Carey in his anxiety for the safety of the mission, consented only on condition that it should be a monthly, and should avoid political discussion <sup>2</sup> The first Bengali periodical therefore confined itself purely to instructive

*Digdarśan* (April  
1818) or *The Indian  
Youth's Magazine*

<sup>1</sup> When on March 21, 1800, an advertisement appeared in the official *Calcutta Gazette*, announcing that the missionaries had established a press at Śrīrāmpur, it at once roused Lord Wellesley who, although a liberal statesman, had fettered the press in British India. But on the assurance of Mr Brown, the Governor General wrote to the missionaries saying that he was personally favourable to the movement and that such an Oriental press would be invaluable to the College of Fort William.

<sup>2</sup> Here is an extract from the minutes of the meeting of the Mission regarding the publication of *Digdarśan* —

"Feb 13th, 1818 Mr Marshman having proposed the publication of a periodical work in Bengali to be sold amongst the natives for the

literary scientific or historical essays of general interest. Each article was written both in Bengali and English put opposite to each other the English version on one page on the left and the Bengali on the next page on the right.<sup>1</sup> The *Digdarśan* or *Magazine for Indian Folk* as its title-page says in the alternative (দ্বিদর্শন অর্থাৎ কৃৎ লোকের কারণ সংগৃহীত নানা উদ্দেশ্য) was published in April 1818 and was thus the first paper of its kind in Bengali. An enumeration of the contents of the first number would indicate the nature as well as the variety of the topics dealt with. It was essentially meant for the diffusion of useful knowledge on various subjects and none of the articles had any great pretensions for original writing artistic presentation or literary finish. The first number contained the following articles—আমেরিকার দর্শন বিষয়ে (Of the Discovery of America) হিন্দুধর্মের সৌন্দর্য বিবরণ

purpose of exciting a spirit of inquiry among them, it was resolved that there was no objection to the publication of such a journal provided all political intelligence more especially regarding the East, be excluded from it and it do not appear in a form likely to alarm government. It must therefore be confined to articles of general information and notice of new discoveries, but a small place may be allotted to local events, with the view of rendering it attractive (*History of Serampore Mission* vol. II p. 161.)

From the *Tenth Memoir* relative to Serampore Translations (July 1833 Appendix) it appears that two editions were issued, viz. (1) bilingual, English and Bengali; (2) in Bengali only. In the volumes we have been able to trace, nos. i-xvi (from April 1818 to March 1819 and from January to April 1820) are bilingual; while nos. xv to xxvi (from March 1820 to February 1821) it is published only in Bengali. We have another edition nos. i-xii (April 1818 to March 1819) published only in Bengali. So it seems that the two editions were issued simultaneously from the very beginning of its publication.

The date given by Dinsh Chandra Sen (*History* p. 877) as February 1818 is incorrect. See quotation from Marshman's letter at p. 233 postea (footnote). The first number with the date April 1818 may be seen in the Sâhitya Parishat Library.



(Of the Limits of Hindoosthan), হিন্দুস্থানেব বাণিজ্য (Of the Trade of Hindoosthan), বগুন দ্বাৰা সাঁদলৰ সাহেবেব আকাশ গমন (Mr Sadler's Journey in a Balloon from Dublin to Holyhead) বিজ্ঞবিজ্ঞস পৰ্বত বিষয়ে (Of Mount Vesuvius) It will be seen that it was eminently fit to be a "Youth's Magazine," and the nature of the themes as well as the manner of expression was varied and novel enough to make it attractive. There were interesting scientific papers on the compass, the metals, the steamboat, botany of India, etc, historical accounts of ancient and modern nations, sketches, narratives of travel, notices of England and other countries, and a few essays on the commerce and productions of India, all treated in a popular and easy way. The following selection will serve for a specimen.

### বঙ্গভূমিৰ মহাভূক্তি

বঙ্গভূমিৰ প্ৰবান উৎপন্ন বস্তু বাত, তাহাব অনেক অগ্ৰ অগ্ৰ দেশে প্ৰেৰিত কৰা যায়, দৈবাত কখন কখন ফল না জন্মিলে ভূক্তি হয় এইৰূপ ভূক্তি বঙ্গভূমিতে ও হিন্দুস্থানেব অগ্ৰ অগ্ৰ ভাগে কখন কখন হইয়াছিল। সন ১৭৭০ সালে বাঙ্গালা দেশে এইকপ অতি ঘোৰ ভূক্তি হইয়াছিল, তৎকালে নবাব ও অগ্ৰাভ ভাগ্যবান লোকেবা দৰিদ্ৰ লোকেবদেব মধ্যে অনেক তথুল দান কৰিবাছিলেন, কিন্তু শেষে তাঁহাবদেব ভাগ্যব শূন্য হওৱাতে দান নিবৃত্ত হইল। ইহাতে অনেক দুঃখি লোক জীবনোপায় প্ৰত্যাশাতে তৎকালীন ইংলণ্ডীয়েবদেব প্ৰধান বসতি স্থান কলিকাতায় আহিল। কিন্তু তখন কোম্পানীৰ ভাগ্যবে দ্ৰব্যভাব অকুণ্ঠ তাহাবদেব কোন উপায় হইল না। ইহাতে সেই ভূক্তিবাসেব ৬ই সপ্তাহ পবে সহস্ৰ সহস্ৰ লোক বাজপথে ও মাঠে স্থানে স্থানে পড়িয়া মৰিল। এবং কুকুৰ ও শকুনিদ্বাৰা ঐ সকল মৃতশবীৰ ছিন্নভিন্ন হওৱাতে বায়ু অনিষ্টকাৰী হইল, তাহাতে সকলেব ভয় জন্মিল। এই ভূক্তিব পশ্চাৎ মহামাৰী আদিতেছে। কোম্পানীৰ প্ৰেৰিত এক শত লোক নিখুণ্ড ছিল, তাহাবা ডুলি ও ষোড়ান্বাৰা ঐ সকল মৃত শবীৰ

নদীতে ফেলিত তৎপ্রবৃত্ত নদীর জল এমত পথেতে পুসিল যে তাহার মৎস অশাশ্বত হইল, এবং অনেক মৎসভোজী তৎক্ষণাৎ মবিল।

তৎসময়ে আগষ্ট মাসে অতিদূর্ব আকাশে একটা তরানক চূর্ণক্ষণদর্শন হইল; তাহার বর্ষ কক্ষমেঘের স্থায় সে কখন কখন দীর্ঘকৈ আচ্ছাদিত করিল এবং কলিকাতার উপরি ভাগে অনেক দূরপৰ্য্যন্ত ব্যাপ্ত হইল যে দিন অতিশয় গ্রীষ্ম সেই দিন ঐ মেঘ নীচে দৃষ্ট হইল তাহাতে তিন দিন পর্য্যন্ত লোকেরদের অনেক তাবনা ভয়িল। তৃতীয় দিবসে মেঘাশ্রয় ও অতিশয় গ্রীষ্ম হইলে ঐ কক্ষ মেঘ এত নীচে আটল যে সকলে দূরদর্শন দর্শন করিতে পাইল, তখন বিশেষরূপে জানা গেল যে দংশকীটের মত বড় পতঙ্গ রক্তবর্ণ শরীর ও মস্তক ও চক্ষু বড় ও মধুমক্ষিকার মত শ্রেণীবদ্ধ উড়িবার সময়ে অতিবহু রেখার স্থায় দৃষ্টি তাহাহইতে লোকেরদের এমত ভয় হইল যে কেহ তাহার একটাকেও ধরিল না। সাইজিগ লগপৰ্য্যন্ত বৃষ্টি সমকালীন পক্ষে একহানে নিশ্চিত রূপে রহিল। পরে চারিহু উর্ধ্বে উঠিল এবং কিঞ্চিৎকাল পরে তত নামিল। পরে বায়ু কোণহইতে একটা বায়ু উত্তীর্ণা ছট দিন পর্য্যন্ত থাকিল ঐ বায়ুকে পূর্ণমত উঠিল ও নামিল কিন্তু অধিক শীতরূপে তাহার পরদিবস অতিপ্রচু্যবে আকাশ শূন্য দেখা গেল। এই মেঘদর্শন হওনের পূর্ণ কতকদিন ভেদ ও কীটাদি রাত্রিকালে গুপ্তগতন সময়ে অবিরত শব্দ করিয়াছিল। তাহার এককালে এমন অদৃষ্ট হইল যে নদী তির আর কোনখানে তাহার দেখা গেল না ও শুনা গেল না।

এই চূর্ণিক্ষ জলাভাবপ্রবৃত্ত হইরাছিল। বঙ্গভূমিতে হই ফসল অয়ে এক ফসল ক্ষুদ্র শস্ত ও অল্প মহাকণল বাতাদি কিন্তু ১৭৬৯ সালে জলাভাবপ্রবৃত্ত মহাকণল বাতাদি ভয়িল না এবং সন ১৭৭৭ সালেও ক্ষুদ্র ফসল ভয়িল না ইত্যেই পূর্ণনিষিত দূরদর্শা উপরিত হইরাছিল।

এই চূর্ণিক্ষ অতাপি বঙ্গভূমিহ লোকেরদের মন হইতে লুপ্ত হয় নাই এবং অনেক বৃদ্ধলোকেরা আপনাদের বৌবনকালীন জিয়ার সময় সেই চূর্ণিক্ষ বৎসর দ্বারা গণনা করেন।

This useful paper, however, lasted only for three years (1818-1821)<sup>1</sup>, but it became very popular and successful for a new venture, and its success emboldened the missionaries to launch upon the more perilous task of starting a newspaper in Bengali. A quarter or more of

*Samāchār darpan* or  
the Mirror of News  
23rd May, Saturday,  
1818

a century's intolerance on the part of the government had made the missionaries diffident, but their eagerness to open a new avenue to the thoughts of the nation made them overcome all scruples, more specially because the *Bengal Gazette* (1816-1818)<sup>2</sup> the only paper in Bengali hitherto published, was now dead, and its place required to be filled up. Nothing could keep back

History of its publi-  
cation

the indefatigable missionaries but they took every precaution against imperilling the safety of their mission. Consequently, before the actual publication of the paper, they issued prospectus and advertisements in the local papers about the proposed journal so that objections, if any, from official and other quarters would be taken beforehand. Then on the critical night before the publication, the first proof of the first number was laid before the assembled brotherhood at their weekly meeting on Friday evening. Dr Carey, whom long experience had taught to be more cautious mentioned his fears about the Mission, but he

<sup>1</sup> I have been able to trace the following numbers (in the Sāhitya Parishat Library), April 1818 to March 1819, nos. i xii, January 1820 to April 1820, nos. xiii xvi, May 1820 to February 1821, nos. xvii to xxvi. It seems only 26 numbers were published. *The Catalogue of E I Company's Library* (1845) (p. 267) enters *Digdarsan* only for April 1818 to February 1821.

<sup>2</sup> Long says (*Return of Names and Writings, etc.*) that the *Bengal Gazette* was published for a year. But unfortunately file of this paper is not available any where.

consented to its publication when Marshman promised to send a copy with an analysis of its contents in English to Government, and to stop the enterprise if it should be officially disapproved. Lord Hastings was fighting

Long (Catalogue) calls the paper *Serampore Darpan* and in the xiiith vol. of the *Calcutt Review* (1830) in the article on Bengali Literature he calls it the *Darpan of Serampore*. Of course this might be an abbreviated way of speaking but accurately put it must bear the name of *Samdhan Darpan*. The narrative of the publication of *Digdarshan* as well as of this paper is thus given by J. O. Marshman:

History of its publication as given in a letter of Marshman's.

"It appeared (in 1818) that the time was ripe for a native newspaper and I offered the missionaries to undertake the publication of it. The jealousy which the Government had always manifested of the periodical press

appeared, however to present serious obstacle. The English journals in Calcutta were under the strictest surveillance and many a column appeared resplendent with the stars which were substituted at the last moment for the editorial remarks and through which the censor had drawn his fatal pen. In this state of things it was difficult to suppose that a native paper would be tolerated for a moment. It was resolved therefore to feel the official pulse by starting a monthly magazine the first instance and the *Digdarshan* appeared in April 1818. It was composed of historical and other notices, likely from their novelty to excite the attention of the natives and to sharpen their curiosity. In the last page, in a smaller type some few items of political intelligence were inserted. Two numbers were published, and copies were sent to the principal members of Government (including the Censor) and the fact of the publication was widely circulated by advertisement in all the English papers of Calcutta. As no objection appeared to be taken to the publication of the magazine by the censor though it contained news, it was resolved at once to launch the weekly paper and call it by the name given to the earliest English news-letter the *Mirror of News* or *Samachar Darpan*. But Dr Carey who had been labouring fifteen years in India during the period when the opposition to missionary efforts and enlightenment of the natives was in full vigour was unfavourable to the publication of the Journal because he feared it would give umbrage in official circles and weaken the good understanding which had been gradually growing up between the missionaries and the government. He strenuously advised that

the Pindaris, and nothing was said by his Council. On his return, the Governor-General wrote to the Editor with his own hand, expressing his entire approval of the paper and declaring that "the effect of such a paper must be extensively and importantly useful." He even induced his Council to allow it to circulate by post at one-fourth the then heavy rate<sup>1</sup> thus giving a fresh impetus to the native new-paper press. It became popular

Encouragement of  
Government

the idea of it should be dropped, but he was overruled by his two colleagues, Dr Marshman and Dr Ward. When the prospectus was brought up for final examination at the weekly meeting of the missionaries the evening before the day of publication, he renewed his objection to the undertaking on the grounds he had stated. Dr Marshman then offered to proceed to Calcutta the next morning and submit the first number of the new Gazette, together with a rough translation of the articles, to Mr Edmonstone, then Vice-President, and to the Chief Secretary (John Adam), and he promised that it should be discontinued if they raised any objection to it. To his great delight he found both of them favourable to the undertaking. At the same time he transmitted a copy of the paper to Lord Hastings, then in the North Western Provinces, and was happy to receive a reply in his own hand highly commending the project of endeavouring to excite and gratify a spirit of enquiry in the native mind by means of a newspaper. And thus the journal was established. A copy of it was sent with a subscription book to all the great baboos in Calcutta, and the first name entered on the list was that of Dwarkanath Tagore. On the return of Lord Hastings to the Presidency, he endeavoured to encourage the undertaking by allowing the journal to circulate through the country at one fourth the usual charge of postage which at that time was extravagantly high" (*Extract of a Letter from J C Marshman to Dr George Smith published in the latter's Twelve Indian Statesmen* 1898, pp 230-33. The same account is to be found in *J C Marshman, Life and Times of Carey, etc*, vol II, p 161 seq.) Also see *Cal Rev* 1907, vol cxxiv, p 391-93.

<sup>1</sup> For the postage-rates, see Seton-Karr, *op cit*, vol IV (1868), p 51, etc. Government also encouraged the paper by subscribing to 4 hundred copies during 1820-1828.

at once, and as it avoided all religious controversy in the earlier issues, it was welcomed even by the most orthodox among the Hindus. The name of Dīrakānāth Thākur headed the list of subscribers and its long life of 33 years in spite of later oppositions and vicissitudes till 1851 sufficiently indicates its power efficiency and popularity as the leading and for some time the only paper of the day. To the *Darpan* it is

Its power, efficiency and popularity said 'the educated natives looked as the means of bringing the oppression of their own countrymen to the knowledge of the public and the authorities. Government too found it useful for contradicting rumours and promoting contentment if not loyalty.'

The first number of the *Samāchār Darpan* was published on Saturday May 23 1818 (১ ই মেসাহে জন ১২২৫)²

Smith, op. cit. p. 204

The earlier files of the paper had long become very scarce and this fact has given rise to various erroneous views about the date of its first publication. A file of this paper from its origin (May 23, 1818 to July 14 1821) will be found in the Library of the Sāhitya Parishat. Even Marshman himself in his two books (*History of Serampore Mission* vol II, p. 163, and *History of Bengal* 1869 p. 251) gave the dates erroneously as May 31 Sunday 1818, and May 29 Friday 1818 respectively. Dinosh Chandra Sen in following Marshman, has fallen into the same error. In his *History Long* (*Descriptive Catalogue*, 1856, p. 66) gives August 23, Friday 1818. The most obvious mistake is that made by Rajnarāyan Basu who in his discourse on Bengali Language and Literature dates the paper from 1816, and the *Calcutta Christian Observer* (Feb., 1840) is equally mistaken in taking 1819 as the date of the first publication of this paper. I have been able to get access to the following files of the paper (a) from May 23 1818 to July 14, 1821 (Sāhitya Parishat Library) (b) from 1821 to 1837 (Imperial Library Calcutta) (c) From 1851 to 1852 (Bengal Asiatic Society's Library). I have given an account of these files in an article in the *Sāhitya Parishat Patra* vol. 24 pp. 149-150.

and from the seventh number it bore on its front the following motto

দর্পণে মুখমৌল্যনিব দার্যনিচক্ষণাঃ ।  
ব্রতাসুনিহ ডানসু ননাচিবস্য দর্পণ ॥

Marshman tells us that the paper was so baptised because the name (*Mirror of News*) was associated with the earliest English news-

letter.<sup>1</sup> But its claim to be regarded as the earliest Bengali newspaper is not, in spite of current and popular opinion,<sup>2</sup> justifiable, Its claim to be regarded as the first Bengali newspaper, that credit belongs to the *Bengal Gazette* (1816-1818) of Gaṅgādhur Bhaṭṭāchārya

and popular opinion,<sup>2</sup> justifiable, for the first Bengali newspaper was not the *Samāchār Darpan* but the *Bengal Gazette*. The latter journal, now scarce, was published for the first time in 1816 by one Gaṅgādhara<sup>3</sup> Bhaṭṭāchārya of whom little, however, is known. This paper lasted for two years, having been extinguished in 1818.<sup>4</sup> But though not the first newspaper in Bengali, *Samāchār Darpan* practically laid the foundation of vernacular journalism in Bengali by directing the attention and energy of the Bengali people to a neglected literary field which now

<sup>1</sup> See extract from G. Smith, *Twelve English Statesmen*, quoted at p. 233 foot note.

<sup>2</sup> It has been so called by many an eminent writer, e.g., J. C. Marshman, *History of Serampore Mission*, vol. II, p. 163, and *History of Bengal*, p. 251, Long, *Cal. Rev.*, 1850, vol. xiii, p. 145 (but not in the *Catalogue* where he has corrected the mistake), *Friend of India*, Sept. 19, 1850, Smith, *Life of Carey*, p. 204, Dinesh Ch. Sen, *History of Bengali Language and Literature* (1911), p. 877, etc.

<sup>3</sup> He must not however be confounded with Gaṅgākṣior Bhaṭṭāchārya.

<sup>4</sup> Long's *Descriptive Catalogue*, also his *Return*, etc. already cited, But in the *Return*, etc., it is said to have continued for one year only. But see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol. v, pp. 248-250, *Cal. Rev.* 1907, p. 293. We learn from Rājñāyana Basu (*Bāṅgālā Bhāṣā O Sāhitya Biṣayaḥ Bakrītā*, p. 59) that Gaṅgādhara was well-known as the publisher of illustrated editions of *Annadāmangal*, etc.

so much engages their activity and affords so many opportunities for benefiting the country

Although conducted chiefly by the missionaries it was never wholly a missionary paper. Correspondence from various parts of the country—for it had a very large circulation over 360 stations in the country—

useful articles on scientific, political  
Nature of its articles. historical and geographical topics<sup>1</sup>  
adorned its eagerly read pages

It recorded all the interesting contemporary incidents political and administrative and we have short articles on the fight with the Pindaris, on the conflict with Holkar Sindha and other Indian powers on the last stage in the war between England and France (including many references to Napoleon Bonaparte) an account of the Mogul Emperor and of Raja Ranjit Sing and essays on other interesting topics. Besides these, there were descriptions reviews and advertisements of new publications educational news (like the proceedings of the School Book Society and the School Society and the establishment of a college at Śrīrāmpar) various social topics (like the description of Śrāddha ceremony of Gopinmohan Thākur) market reports reports on stocks and shares and on exports and imports civil appointments programmes of the Governor-General's tour commercial and shipping intelligence sensational news (burning fatalities theft, dacoity murder earthquake storm, rath jātrā ceremony at Māhes) and references to the filthy condition of Calcutta roads and other local complaints. Although chiefly a newspaper it published from time to

For a short list of these articles, See *Sāhitya Parīkṣat Patricā*, already cited, vol. v p. 257. Also my paper in vol. xxiii of the same. For a note on Early Christian Periodicals, see Appendix IV at the end of this volume.



time various useful articles, short moral tales and humorous sketches. Religious controversy was introduced later on and through this it came into collision with Rām Mohan Rāy and his party who started the *Sambād Kaumudī* within a year (1819) as well as with orthodox papers like *Sambād Timra Nāsak*. The scope and object of *Samārṣhār Darpan* was thus set forth at the outset

সমাচারদর্পণ।

কয়েক মাস হইল শ্রীবামপুবেব [ছা]পাখানা হইতে এক পুস্তক<sup>১</sup> [প্রকাশ] হইয়াছিল ও সেই পুস্তক [না]স ২ ছাপাইবাব বল্লও ছিল তা[হা]র অভিপ্রায় এই যে এতদেশীয় [লো]কেবদের নিকটে সকল প্রকাব [বি]জ্ঞা প্রকাশ হব কিহুসে পুস্তকে [সক]লেব সম্মতি হইল না এই [কাবণ] যদি সে পুস্তক মাস ২ ছাপা [হইত] তবে কাহাবো উপকাব [হইত] না অতএব তাহাব পরী[বর্তে] এই সমাচারেব পত্র ছা[পা] অবস্তু কবা গিয়াছে। [ইহাব] নাম সমাচার দর্পণ।

[এই স]মাচারেব পত্র প্রতি সপ্তাহে ছাপা যাইবে তাহাব মধ্যে [এই এই স]মাচার দেওয়া যাইবে।

[১ এতদেশে]ব জজ ও কলেজব [ ]ব ও অল্প বাজকক্ষাধ্য[ক্ষেব-দেব] নিয়োগ।

[২ শ্রীশ্রীযু]ত বড় সাহেব যে ২ [নূতন আঁচ]ন ও হকুম প্রভৃতি [প্রকাশ কবিবে]ন।

[৩ ইংলণ্ড] ও ইউরোপেব অল্প ২ [প্রদেশ হইতে] যে যে নূতন সমাচার [আইসে এবং] এই দেশের নানা [সমাচার]।

[৪ বাণিজ্যাদি]ব নূতন বিবরণ।

৫ লোকেবদের জন্ম ও বিবাহ ও মরণ প্রভৃতি ক্রিয়া।

৬ ইউরোপদেশীয় লোক কর্তৃক যে ২ নূতন সৃষ্টি হইয়াছে সেই সকল পুস্তক হইতে ছাপান যাইবে এবং যে ২ নূতন পুস্তক মাসে ২ ইঞ্চিও হইতে আট ইঞ্চি সেই সকল পুস্তকে যে ২ নূতন নিয় ও কল প্রভৃতির বিবরণ থাকে তাহাও ছাপান যাইবে।

৭ এবং ভারতবর্ষের আটান ইতিহাস ও বিজ্ঞা ও জ্ঞানবান লোক ও পুস্তক প্রভৃতির বিবরণ।

এই সমাচারের পর প্রতি শনিবারে শ্রীতঃকালে সর্বত্র দেওয়া যাইবে তাহার মূল্য প্রতি মাসে দেড় টাকা। প্রথম ছই সমাচারের সমাচারের পর বিনামূল্যে দেওয়া হইবে। ইহাতে যে লোকের বাগনা হইবেক তিনি আপন নাম শ্রীরামপুরের ছাপাখানাতে পাঠাইলে প্রতি সমাচারে তাহার নিকটে পাঠান যাইবে।

Space forbids us to make quotations from the longer articles but we select here a few short specimens relating to a variety of topics

### “বোনাপাট।

মোং সেন্ত হেলিনা হইতে ৪ আগস্তের সমাচার আসিয়াছে তাহাতে জানা গেল যে সেনাপতির অধ্যক্ষেরা বোনাপাটকে আরও দৃঢ়রূপে বাধিবার চেষ্টা করিতেছে যে সেনাপতিরদের জিহাতে তিনি ছিলেন তাহারদিককে অকমাং বিলাতে পাঠাইয়া তাঁহাকে সুনর্কীয় যে নূতন সেনাপতিরদের জিহা করিয়াছিল তাহারদের পরীবর্ত্ত করিয়া সুনর্কীয় নূতন সেনাপতিরদের জিহাতে তাহাকে রাখিয়াছে ইহার হেতু আমরা এত দূরে থাকিয়া জানিতে পারি না কেবল কল্প দেখিতে পাই।” (২রা আগ্রহাঙ্গী ১৮১২। ২ শে পৌষ ১২২৪)।

### “কলিকাতার নগরমা।

কলিকাতা শহরের নগরমাগিতে যে সকল সাহেবেরা নিযুক্ত আছেন তাহারা অধ্যয়ন করিয়াছেন যে কলিকাতার অনেক অনেক গভীর নগরমা আছে তাহাতে অল্প কোন জ্ঞান পড়িলে তাহা পঢ়িয়া অত্যন্ত চর্চক নির্গত হয় তাহাতে লোকেরদের সন্ত সোগ জন্মে। অতএব সে

সকল নবদামা বন্দ কবিতা কিঞ্চিৎ গভীর নবদামা কবী খাউক।”  
ইত্যাদি (২৭শে মে, ১৮২০। ১৫ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৭)।

“বেদান্ত মত।

৯ই মে ববিবাব শ্রীযুত বাধাচরণ মজুমদারের পুত্র শ্রীকৃষ্ণমোহন ও শ্রীপ্রজ্ঞামোহন মজুমদারের যবে শ্রীযুত বামমোহন বায় প্রভৃতি সকল বৈদান্তিকেবা একত্র হইলেন এবং পরস্পর আপনাবদেব মতেব বিবেচনা কবিলেন। আমবা শুনিয়াছি যে সেই সভাতে জাতিব প্রতিবিধি কথা নিষেধ বিষয়ে বিচাব হইল এবং খাণ্ডেব প্রতি যে নিষেধ আছে তাহারও বিষয়ে বিচাব হইল। এবং যুবতি স্ত্রীর মরণানন্তব সহমরণ না কবিয়া কেবল একান্তর্যে কালক্ষেপ কর্তব্য এই বিষয়েও অনেক বিবেচনা হইল এবং বৈদিকধর্মের বিষয়ে বিচাব হইল সেই সময়ে বেদের উপনিষদ হইতে আপনাবদেব মতানুযায়ি বাক্য পড়া গেল ও তাহার অর্থ করা গেল ও তাঁহাবা বেদান্তেব মতানুসারে গীত গাইলেন।” (২২শে মে, ১৮১৯। ১০ই জ্যৈষ্ঠ, ১২২৬।

“স্কুলবুক সোসয়িটী।

১১ আক্টোবর বুধবারে কলিকাতার স্কুলবুক সোসয়িটী তৃতীয় বৎসবীয় মিসিল হইয়াছে এবং ঐ সোসয়িটী অতি স্নানবস্ত্র চলিতেছে। ঐ সোসয়িটী অতঃপাতি লোকেবা নূতন ২ প্রকার পুস্তক প্রস্তুত কবেন ও বাঙ্গালা পাঠশালাতে বিতরণ করেন। তাহাতে লক্ষণৌয়ের নবাব সাহেব কোম্পানি ডকীল সাহেব দ্বারা স্কুলবুক সোসয়িটী ব্যয়ের কাবণ এক হাজার টাকা কলিকাতা পাঠাইয়া দিয়াছেন। শ্রীযুত মন্তেণ্ড সাহেব ও শ্রীযুত তাবিনীচরণ মিত্রজাব কথাক্রমে যত্নস্বয় বিতালঙ্কাব পুত্র শ্রীযুত বামজয় তর্কালঙ্কাব ঐ সোসয়িটী কোমিটীতে আপন পিতাব ভাব পাইয়াছেন এবং শ্রীযুত বাবু উমানন্দ ঠাকুরও ঐ সোসয়িটী অতঃপাতি হইয়াছেন এবং মৌলবী কবীম হোসেন শ্রীযুত লেপ্তেনণ্ড আইস সাহেব ও কাজী আবদুল হমিদেব কথাক্রমে পুনর্দাব ঐ সোসয়িটী অতঃপাতি হইয়াছেন।” (২১শে অক্টোবর, ১৮২০। ৬ই কার্তিক, ১২২৭)।

“নূন পুস্তক।

ঐদৃশ শিল্পি কেবল সাতের টে গৌড় (১৮) পুস্তক হইতে সংগ্ৰহ করিয়া [চাণ্ডালী নাম এক নূন পুস্তক বাঙ্গালি ভাষায় করিয়া মোঃ হিরামল্লকে ছাপা করিবে] চেন টোতে নানা প্রকার বিস্তার করা আছে ঐ প্রকার মতো আটচালি দিয়া ছাপার ফর্ম একাকাল কাগজেতে এর অক্ষরসমূহ মাল ২ ছাপা হইবেক। ঐ আটচালি দিয়া ছাপার ফর্মতে এক নম্বর কেবল দাঁটবেক ঐ এক ২ নম্বরের মূল্য শুই ২ টাকা।” (১২ই জুন ১৮১১। ৩১শে জুলাই ১৮১১)।

উপস্থিত বক্তা।

এক সময়ে জ্ঞান কেশের বাঙ্গালি বোম্বের প্রধান কর্মসূচকের নিকট এক দূর পুস্তকে [নূন উকীল করিয়া পাঠাইলেন। উকীল কর্মসূচকের নিকটে গিয়া সাক্ষ্য করিল ও বর্ণনাদ্বারা জানে গেল। ঐ প্রত্যক্ষ কর্মসূচক ক্রোধপূর্বক দূর উকীলকে কহিলেন যে [আমি বাঙ্গালি কি আমার সহিত উপস্থাপন করেন কেবল দাঁটব দাড়ী উকীল নাট এমত বালককে আমার নিকটে পাঠাইয়াছেন। ইহা শুনিয়া উকীল উত্তর করিল যে যদি আমার বাঙ্গালি জানিলেন যে জ্ঞান ও বিদ্যা সকলি দাড়ীর মতো আছে তবে এক চাকরকে পাঠাইলেই উপদ্রুত হইত। ইহাতে কর্মসূচক আশ্চর্যকৃত হইলেন।” (২১শে এপ্রিল ১৮১১)।

With regard to the subsequent history of the paper we do not get any complete information. Long states that its existence was limited to 21 years from the date of publication; in other words it ceased to exist in 1830. Mahendranath Bidyadhar in an article in the *Sāhitya Parimala Patrika*<sup>2</sup> states that it continued till 1851. But both these views are not correct. From the files of the paper in the Calcutta Imperial Library (from 1831 to

<sup>1</sup> Long, *Return of Name and Writings to 1835* p. 147.  
<sup>2</sup> Vol. v (1905) p. 220.

1837) and in the Bengal Asiatic Society Library (from May 3, 1851 to April 24, 1852), we get clear evidence of its existence till April 24, 1852 and of the fact that there was no breach in its publication from 1831 to 1837. We also gather from an article in the *Calcutta Christian Observer* (1840)<sup>1</sup> that it did not cease even till 1840. In December 25, 1841 the *Samāchār Darpan* disappeared for some time but it was re-born again in 1851 because on the file of May 3, 1851 we find the numbering of the new series at "vol I no 1" (১ বালম। ১ সংখ্যা). On the first page also of this new series we get this editorial note

“সমাচারদর্পণের নমস্কাব।

পাঠক মহাশযেবেদেব সমীপে প্রাচীন দর্পণেব নামে ও আকাব প্রকাবে উপস্থিত হওয়াতে ভবমা কবি অনেক পাঠক মহাশয় আগাব-দিগকে বহুকালীন বৃদ্ধ বন্ধু স্বরূপ দর্শন করিয়া গ্রহণ কৰিবেন। যখন ১৮৪১ সালেব ২৫ ডিসেম্বৰ তাৰিখে দর্পণেব আদর্শন হইল তখন পুনরুদয় হওনেব প্রত্যাশা ছিল না পৰন্তু দেখুন পুনরুত্থিত হইলাম। এই দর্পণেব নাম ও বেশ বৃদ্ধ প্রবীণেব, সাহস ও শক্তি নবীনেব।” ইত্যাদি (১ বালম। ১ সংখ্যা। তৰা মে, শনিবাব, ১৮৫১। ২১শে বৈশাখ, ১২৫৮ সাল)।

From 1831 to 1837, the paper was bilingual, being written both in Bengali and English in parallel columns. After its resurrection its bilingual stage in 1851 it continued bilingual.<sup>2</sup> But there is no evidence to indicate from what precise

<sup>1</sup> February 1840, pp 65 66

<sup>2</sup> This is confirmed by the entry in the Appendix to the *Tenth Memoir* published from Śrīrāmpur (dated July 4, 1832) where the paper is described as written in “Bengali and English, in parallel columns” and published every Wednesday and Saturday morning. We are told in the above article in the *Patrikā* (vol v, p 255) that the bilingual state began in 1829. This is quite probable, though no evidence is mentioned to support the view. It is also probable as stated there that for a time, Persian found a place in it

date it first became bilingual. From the above article in the *Christian Observer* we learn that it was written in English and in Bengali even till 1840. It would seem therefore that it continued in this state till its cessation in 1841.

As to whether the paper had an unbroken existence from 1818 to 1831, we can determine this from indirect evidence. On every issue of 1831 and 1832 we have the numbering as volumes xiii and xiv respectively. Its first publication was in 1818 so that till 1831 we naturally expect 13 volumes to have been published assuming its continued existence till that date and this is confirmed by the numbering quoted. From this the conclusion is inevitable that from 1818 to 1831 (or rather to 1840) it had a continuous existence although unfortunately we have got no file preserved from 1841 to 1831.

In 1831 it was published on every Saturday as the head note 'Serampore Published every Saturday morning' indicates. From 1818 to 1831 therefore it was a weekly paper published every Saturday morning. From 1832 it became bi-weekly as the head note on the files of that year show—'Published every Wednesday and Saturday morning.' But from November 15 1832 it became Saturday weekly again and probably continued so till April 24 1837. After 1831 it was still a weekly paper.

In 1818 its editor was J. C. Marshman and he probably continued in that office till 1834; for in the issue of November 15 1834 we find this remark:

‘চন্দ্রিকা নামক মঙ্গলবার বর্ষপত্রের বিবরণে যে অমূল্য গ্রন্থ প্রকাশক উক্তি লিখিয়াছেন তাহাতে আমরা বিশেষ যত্ন সহকারে ইংল্যান্ড ও ভারত ঐ উক্তি বর্ণনৈকপাঠে প্রকাশিত হইল। কিন্তু এক বিবরণে তাহার কিঞ্চিৎ ভ্রম আছে তিনি লিখিয়াছেন বর্ষপত্র প্রথম প্রকাশিত হইল। তাহার কেহী নাহে।’

কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত হয় ইহা প্রকৃত নহে দর্পণেব এই ক্ষণকাল সম্পাদক যে ব্যক্তি কেবল নেই ব্যক্তিব ঝুঁকিতেই বোল বসবেবও অধিক হইল অর্থাৎ দর্পণেব আবস্থাবধি এই পর্য্যন্ত প্রকাশ হইয়া আসিতেছে।”

From 1857 Townsend, editor of the *Friend of India* probably conducted this paper for in the file of that year (May 3, towards the end of no 1), we find this entry  
শ্রীবানপুৰেব বঙ্গালয়ে শ্রীটৌনেও নাহেব কর্তৃক প্রকাশিত। Moreover, a correspondent of the paper writes in May 10, 1851

“সেলাম পুৰঃসব নিবেদননিদং গবর্ণমেন্ট গেজেট পাঠ কবিয়া আনাবদিগেব বহুকালেব শোক নিবাবণ হইল যেহেতুক সত্যপ্রদীপেব পৰিবৰ্ত্তে পুনৰায় সনাচাবদর্পণ প্রকাশ হইতে লাগিল” ইত্যাদি।

This *Satya Pradīpa* was a weekly paper edited by Townsend. It was published in 1850<sup>1</sup> but it did not continue for more than a year, having ceased in 1851.<sup>2</sup> Probably after its cessation, Townsend took up the editorship of *Samāchār Darpan*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Long, *Return relating to Bengali Publication*, 1859, p. xl

<sup>2</sup> Long, *Return of Names and Writings*, 1855, p. 141

<sup>3</sup> In the *Journal of Bengal Academy of Literature* (vol. 1, no. 6, Jan 6, 1898) it is said that Bhabūnīcharan Banerji was editor of *Samāchār Darpan* for some time. This is very unlikely, considering the facts that from 1822 Bhabūnī was conducting *Samāchār Chandrikā* and that there was enough antagonism of policy and views between *Chandrikā* and *Darpan*.

## CHAPTER VIII

### LATER EUROPEAN WRITERS

In the publication of the periodicals described in the last chapter it will be seen that the most active part was taken by the two Marshmans, father and son. The labours of Dr Joshua Marshman to whom indeed was due the consolidation of the Mission were too varied and wide-spread to be confined chiefly to the study and encouragement of Bengali.<sup>1</sup> His son John Clark Marshman who was born in August 1794 inherited in a large measure all his literary predilections, his great capacity for work as well as his unflagging philanthropic zeal. From 1812 he began to direct his father's religious undertakings and entered with zeal into all the labours of the mission. His reputation as a European scholar in Bengali secured for him the post of Translator in Bengali to Government, and his numerous Bengali works fully maintain this reputation. He returned to England in 1852 and died at Redcliffe Square, North Kensington London July 8 1877.<sup>2</sup>

Other European  
writers of Bengali

John Clark Marsh-  
man 1794-1877

Chronologically speaking the European writers of Bengali of whom enumeration follows below do not properly belong to this period; for this period ends at about 1825 and a distinctly new movement becomes dominant thereafter. The literary labours of the missionaries lose their importance and occupy only a subsidiary place in that movement after 1825. They are mentioned here in order to keep up continuity of treatment.

For more details, See *Annual Register* 1877 p. 164; *Times* July 10, 1877; *Journ. R. A. Soc.* 1878 vol. x Ann. Rep. pp. xx-xli;



J C Marshman was indeed a versatile and voluminous writer, both in English and Bengali, and it is not possible to give here a complete list of his works. The following are the more important works in Bengali due to him or ascribed to him.

(1) ভাবতবর্ষেব ইতিহাস। অর্থাৎ কোম্পানি বাহাদুরেব সংস্থাপনাবধি মাকু'ইশ হেষ্টিংসেব বাজ্যশাসনেব শেষ বৎসৰ পর্য্যন্ত ইংলণ্ডীয়েবদেব কৃত তাবদিববণ। ২ বালয়। ত্রীবামপুৰ। ১৮৩১। or History of India from the Settlement of the E I Company down to the Conquest of the Pundaris by the Marquis of Hastings in 1819 2 vols Serampore 1831 (Also translated from English by Gopāl Lāl Mitia, Calcutta 1840)

(2) বাঙ্গালাৰ ইতিহাস or History of Bengal from the Accession of Suraj-ad-Daulah to the Administration of Lord William Bentinck translated from the English of J C Marshman<sup>1</sup> Calcutta 1848

(3) পুৰাতত্ত্বেব সংক্ষেপ বিববণ। অর্থাৎ পৃথিবীৰ সৃষ্টি অবধি খৃষ্টীয়ান শকেব আবন্ত পর্য্যন্ত। ত্রীবামপুৰ। ১৮৩৩। or Brief Survey of History in Bengalee from the Creation to the Christian era Calcutta 1862. (Also called ইতিবৃত্তশাব)

(4) দেওয়ানি আইনেব সংগ্রহ। অর্থাৎ যে সকল আইন ও আইনেব অর্থ মকু'লব অৰ্ভব প্রভৃতি ইংবাজী ১৭৯৩ সাল লাং ১৮৩৪ সাল হইয়াছে তাহা। ত্রীবৃত্ত জান মার্শমান সাহেব কর্তৃক

*Illustrated London News*, 1877, *Law Times*, 1877, *Dictionary of National Biography* (a good list of his English works will be found here) Also *Dictionary of British and American Authors*, *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1838, pt II, p 216

<sup>1</sup> Also translated by Wenger (2nd Edition, 1859) named বঙ্গদেশেব পুরাতত্ত্ব।

সংগৃহীত। ঐশ্বৰ্য্যমূৰ্ত্তি। ১৮০৪। or a Translation of J C Marshman's Guide to the Civil Law in the Presidency of Fort William containing all the unrepealed regulations acts and circular orders of Government and summary reports of the Sudder Courts from 1793 to 1843 in 2 vols 1843 (2nd Ed Serampore 1849) ¹

(5)? জ্যোতিষ ও গোলদ্বার or a Treatise on Astronomy and Geography translated into Bengalee ² 2nd Edition Serampore 1819

(6) দারোগার কৰ্ম্মপ্রদৰ্শক গ্রন্থ or a Translation of J C Marshman's Darogah's Manual comprising the duties of the landholders in connexion with the police Serampore. 1851

(7) সমুদ্র ও বীর্য্য ইতিহাস। সকল লোকের হিতার্থে বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় তর্জমা করা গেল। তাহার একদিকে ইংরাজী একদিকে বাঙ্গালা। ঐশ্বৰ্য্যমূৰ্ত্তি। ১৮২২। or Anecdotes of Virtue and Valour translated into Bengalee and printed with the English and Bengalee Versions on opposite pages in two parts Serampore Press. 18২9

A specimen of its legal language is given here. It will be seen that the language though persianised is yet more easy and natural than the stiff and technical legal diction of the beginning of the century

অধিবাস ও তালুকদার ও জুমাদিকারী ও ইমারদার একত্ৰিত সাধ্য আছে যে তাহারিণের কাহার মালিকদারীর বাকী দায়িত্ব কোম মক বল তালুকদার রাইরত একত্ৰিত উপর থাকিলে যদি সেই বাকী টাকা মাল হোক করণের দ্বারা আদায় করিত বা পারেন তবে সেই বাকীদার অথবা তাহার মালিকদিগের হামে সেই বাকী তলব করিত অথবা সেই বাকীদার মালিকদিগ পলাইতে উদ্যত হইলে তাহাকে তলব দা করিয়া ই পলায়নাদি বাকীদার কি মালিকদিগকে দীক্ষের লিখিতমতে কর্ত্তে করিতে পারেন। ইত্যাদি—(vol II, p. ৫)

(8) ক্ষেত্রবাগান বিবরণ অর্থাৎ আগ্রিকলচবাল ও হটিকলচবাল সোসাইটিব নিষ্পত্তি কার্যের বিবরণ পুস্তক or Agri-Horticultural transactions by J Marshman in two volumes 1832-36

(9) Abridgement of Carey's Dictionary <sup>1</sup>

It will be noticed from the above enumeration, that some of these works hardly put forward any claim to literary merit whatsoever, as they are composed and then literary worth on strictly non-literary subjects, while the historical treatises, more or less closely allied to literature pure or proper, are again mere translations or replicas of English originals <sup>2</sup> Marshman's style, like that of most of the European writers of Bengali enumerated below, possesses hardly any characteristic distinction of its own. Indeed there is such a pervading uniformity and general sameness of character in the writings of these European scholars that it would be scarcely necessary to take and comment upon the style and peculiarities of each. We shall, on the other hand, content ourselves, wherever necessary, by giving specimens of their general style in individual cases. The following extract from ভাবতবর্ষের ইতিহাস, the theme of which dealing as it does with historical narrative affords some scope indeed for literary expression, will serve as a specimen of Marshman's style, but it will be noticed that it presents hardly any distinctive feature at all and is greatly inferior to the manner of many of his European colleagues and fellow-writers in the same field.

<sup>1</sup> See page 152 and footnote thereon. Other works ascribed by Long are (1) Æsop's Fables translated (2) Murray's Grammar in Bengali (*Return of Names and Writings, etc*, p 134)

<sup>2</sup> These are the volumes which were intended to form a series of elementary works on History and Science for the use of Indian youths (see Preface to Mack's ক্রিমিক্স বিদ্যার সার Serampore 1834) noticed below

## পলাশির যুদ্ধ।

পলাশিতে নবাব সাহেবের পূর্বকালাবধি কতক সৈন্য ছাউনি করিয়া রাখিয়াছিল এবং ইংলণ্ডেরা যে রাজ্যে সে স্থানে পহুছিলেন ঐ দিবস নবাব সাহেব খুব সে স্থানে উপস্থিত হইলেন। তাহার সঙ্গে পকাশ সহস্র পদাতিক এবং অষ্টাদশ সহস্র অশ্বারূঢ় এবং পকাশটা তোপ ছিল। ইংলণ্ডেরদের কেবল নব্বত্ত গোরা তাহার সম্বোধ একশত গোলান্দাজ ও পকাশ জন মাত্র তদ্রূপ একশত জন টোপস ও ছইছাজার একশত সিপাহী সর্গর্ভজা তিন সহস্র একশত সৈন্য ছিল। তাবৎ দিবস ব্যাপিয়া সংগ্রাম হইল এবং যুদ্ধ আর গোলাফেলিতে নিশ্চয় হইল তাহাতে দুবাজার অত্যন্ত ভীত হইয়া অনিষ্টচেষ্টারদের পরামর্শেতে বেলাবসানে আপন সৈন্তেরদিগকে পশ্চাৎ হটিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন ইহা দেখিয়া মীরজাফর আপন সৈন্য পৃথক করিলেন তাহাতে ক্লাইব সাহেবের মনেতে নিশ্চয় হইল যে মীরজাফর আশ্রয়ের পক্ষে হইবেক অতএব তিনি ইংলণ্ডের সৈন্তেরদিগকে অগ্রসর হইয়া যশস্বিন্দু নবাব সাহেবের অবশিষ্ট সৈন্তের উপর আক্রমণ করিতে আজ্ঞা দিলেন। এই ছই চুর্চটনাতে অর্থাৎ মীরজাফরের বিবালমাতকতাতে ও ইংলণ্ডের সৈন্তের অগ্রসরণ দেখিয়া নবাব সাহেবের মন যে কিঞ্চিৎ দোলায়মান ছিল সে স্থির হইল এবং তিনি ছই সহস্র লোক হইয়া অতি বেগগামি উদ্ধারোহণ পূর্বক পলায়ন করিলেন। নবাব সাহেবের পলায়ন দেখিয়া লকলেই যুদ্ধেতে অমনোযোগী হইল অতএব ইংলণ্ডের সৈন্য বৈকালে পাঁচঘণ্টা সময় বিলম্বেরদের ছাউনিতে প্রবেশ করিল। এষ্টরূপে কুড়ি জন পোরা হত ও আঘাতী হতরাতে এবং বোলজন সিপাহী হত ও ছত্রিশ জন আঘাতী হতরাতে অতি বৃহত্ত্রাণের ও ছয়কোটি লোকের পবিবর্তন হইল। (Vol I p 131)

See also, for an account of the same battle the author's *বঙ্গদেশের পুর্বাঙ্গ* (Ed Wenger) pp. 103-108. It is interesting to compare these accounts with that given by Rājib-lochan in his *Kṛṣṇa Chandra Rayer Charitra*

The next name<sup>1</sup> that we take up is Waid's but we can dismiss it with a few words, as it is not one of any primary importance to Bengali literature. Waid's services as a printer to the Śrīrāmpur Press cannot indeed be exaggerated but his direct connexion with Bengali literature was of the slightest kind. Possibly he could not even speak Bengali so fluently as his colleagues did<sup>2</sup> and the only work which he wrote in Bengali not remarkable either for its form or for its matter was *পীতাম্বর সিংহের চবিত্ত* or *Memon of Pitamber Sing*, a native Christian<sup>3</sup>.

William Carey's son, Felix Carey, however, contributed some of the important works to the literature of the period. Felix Carey was born in October 22, 1786 and died at Śrīrāmpur in November 10, 1822. Within this brief space of life, he applied himself successfully to the philanthropic and missionary work with which his father had been identified and collaborated with him in his literary undertakings. He was a medical missionary of great skill, a first-rate printer trained by Waid, and a scholar in Sanscrit and Pali, Bengali and Burmese, not unworthy his father<sup>4</sup>. He was not only a coadjutor of Rām-kamal Sen<sup>5</sup> but himself planned (1818) the scheme<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See p 106 *ante*

<sup>2</sup> E Carey, *Memoir of Carey*, p. 424

<sup>3</sup> 4th Ed Calcutta 1843

<sup>4</sup> For more details about his life and writings, see Marshman, *Life and Times of Carey*, etc., *Bengal Obituary*, pp 249 250, Smith, *Life of William Carey* (many references), *Dictionary of National Biography*

<sup>5</sup> *Bengal Obituary*, p 250

<sup>6</sup> See বিদ্যাহারাবলী পাঠকেরদের প্রতি লেঃ ফিলিকন কেবী সাহেবের পত্র। appended to F Carey's বিদ্যাহারাবলী তৎপ্রথমগ্রন্থ বাবুজীবিদ্যা।

of bringing out an edition of Bengali encyclopædia. His untimely death prevented him from carrying out his design to a successful issue but he had the satisfaction of seeing the first volume of the series a treatise on Anatomy published before he died. His chief works in Bengali are

(1) ব্রিটন দেশের বিবরণ সঙ্কর or an Abridgement of the History of England from the invasion of Julius Caesar to the death of

His works

George the Second by Dr Goldsmith and continued by an eminent writer to the Peace of Amiens in the year 1802 translated into Bengalee by Felix Carey Serampore 1820

Republished by the School Book Society (2) বাত্রির পথের অগ্রসর বিবরণ or the Pilgrims Progress translated into Bengalee by F Carey 2 Parts Serampore 1821 22 Edition by J D Pearson 1834 by Wenger, 1852

(3) বিদ্যাহারাবলী অর্থাৎ বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত ইউরোপীয় সর্গগ্রন্থাভ্যাস তাৎপৰ্য্যার্থে পরিবিভাদি মূলগ্রন্থাবলী। তৎপ্রথমগ্রন্থ। বাবজেনাবলী।

ফিলিপ্স কেরী কৃত পঞ্চমবার ছাপাকৃত এন্সক্লোপেদিয়া ব্রিটানিকা নাম গ্রন্থাবলী ইহঁতে বাঙ্গালা ভাষায় কৃত।

গরিষ্ঠ উলিখিত কেরী কৃতক তর্জমা বিবেচিত এবং ত্রিকাক্ষ বিভাগকার কৃতক তাবা বিবেচিত ও ত্রিকবিভক্ত তর্জনিরোধনি কৃতক সাহায্যকৃত।

ত্রিষামসূত্রে মিশ্রিত ছাপাবলীতে ছাপাকৃত। সন ১৮২ । or Vidvahanu

bulee or Bengalee Encyclopædia. Vol I Anatomy translated into Bengalee from the 5th edition of Encyclopædia Britannica by F Carey

Assisted by Sroekanta Vidyalankar and Shree Kobichundra Turkasromoni Panlita The whole revised by Rev W Carey

D D Serampore Printed at the Mission Press 1820 (Nov 1) <sup>1</sup>

Other works attributed to F Carey are —(i) Translation of Mill's History of India (Smith, Life of William Carey p. 204; Beng l Obituary p. 250) published by School Book Society (ii) Translation of Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield (Dict of National Biography). (iii) A Work of Land in Bengali (Bengal Obituary p. 205) Blitarcoq is

From a literary point of view, however, none of these works is delectable to the general reader and we may pass over them without any special comment. But the last-named publication has an interest of its own as the first vernacular work on a scientific subject written on the western lines. It will be hardly within our scope to

give a detailed analysis of the book

Importance of his but an enumeration of the chief  
scientific writings heads of subjects dealt with will

sufficiently explain its scope and object. It is divided into three parts (কণ্ড), each part containing several chapters (খণ্ড) and each chapter divided into sections (অধ্যায়), which are again subdivided into paragraphs or articles (পর্ক). The first part deals with Osteology (অস্থিবিজ্ঞা), second part with Comparative Anatomy (তুল্যাতুল্য ব্যবচ্ছেদবিজ্ঞা) while the third part traces the history and progress of the Science (ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যোৎপত্তিকাৰণ) and gives a list of the principal Hindu works (then known) on "the subject of Anatomy, Medicine and Chymistry" with the names of their authors and a brief account of their contents. The whole is rounded off with a glossary of technical and difficult terms (ব্যবচ্ছেদবিদ্যাসংজ্ঞার্থজ্ঞাপক এক অভিধান) which, in certain respects, is the most interesting part of the entire treatise. This enormous volume of about 700 pages, however, is hardly commendable for its stiff and laboured style, bristling as it does with unintelligible technical terms and phrases, but it certainly bears testimony to

undoubtedly incorrect in giving 1818 as the date of publication of F Carey's Anatomy. Dinesh Chandra Sen (*History of Bengali Lit*, p 872) erroneously gives the title of F Carey's Anatomy as "Hadavali Vidyā" (হাভাবলী বিজ্ঞা) obviously mistaking the name বিজ্ঞাভাসাবলী or cyclopædia of knowledge. This book will also be found in the list of School Book Society's publication before 1821,

the compiler's learning his careful research and his unwearied industry. The following will serve as a specimen of its harsh and difficult style —

শূভ্রের কণ্ঠাকৃতি অবর্জনবৃত্ত ঐ মাংসপেশী উর্দ্ধস্থ কণ্ঠ্যাবর্জকেব এবং অপর শূভ্রাবর্জকের কণ্ঠাকৃতি অবর্জনেতে উৎপন্ন হয় এবং উর্দ্ধস্থ নবশূভ্রাবর্জকের কণ্ঠাকৃতি অবর্জনেতে প্রবিষ্ট হয়। শূভ্রের কণ্ঠক অবর্জনপ্রবৃত্ত ঐ মাংসপেশী কণ্ঠককণ্ঠ্যাবর্জকে উত্তোলন করে (p 161)। অপর ঐ পলাশকাকুদ্রের সূর্তমান পর্দার উত্তরণাথে হিত অতি বৃহৎ শুটিকা নামে মাংসপ্রস্থিৎসেতে শর্করা আশ্রিতাবে থাকে ঐ মাংসপ্রস্থিৎসর বাদামবীজাকৃতি প্রবৃত্ত কোনো ২ ব্যবচ্ছেদকেরা তাহারদিসের বাদাম শুটিকা সংজ্ঞা করিয়াছেন (p 232)।

The Glossary however though not always accurate and expressive yet a praiseworthy attempt, is interesting to the student of the language. It covers about 40 pages of close print and is exhaustive as far as the efforts of the compiler could reach who himself was fully cognizant of the difficulties of his task.

For the difficulties of his subject and his style as well as the imperfection of his glossary the compiler does not forget to make an ample apology—

অপর সকল বিদ্যাগ্রন্থে সংজ্ঞাপন না হইলে নির্ভর্য হয় না অতএব যে স্থানে উপযুক্তশব্দ পাওয়া গিয়াছে তাহাই গৃহীত। হইয়াছে কিন্তু যে যে স্থানে উপযুক্তশব্দ পাওয়া যায় নাই সেই সেই স্থানে সম্যকশব্দের সঙ্কট সজ্ঞা পঠান বিদ্যাগ্রন্থে এবং তদ্বিৎসে এতদেবীয় তাৎপর্য আলোচিত হইয়াছে। অপর কহি উপযুক্ত শব্দ পঠানই অতি সাধ্য কার্য অতএব এই বিদ্যাগ্রন্থাবলী গ্রন্থেতে যে যে শব্দ অনুপযুক্ত বোধ হয় সেই সকল জ্ঞাত করাইলে এবং তৎপরীক্ষণে অন্য শব্দ যেহেতু পারক হইলে অভ্যাসে বিবরণ হয় আনিবে। অপর কেহ কেহ বিবেচনা করিয়া কহিয়াছেন যে সকলের প্রবেশন্য গ্রন্থ হ্রাস্য করা কেন এবং সহজ ভাষার কি জন্মে রচনা করা তদ্বিৎসে উত্তর করি যে তাৎপর্য বিদ্যাগ্রন্থ কঠিন অতএব সহজ ভাষার চর্চনা আর হয় না। অপর ইহাও বিবেচনা করুন বহুভাষ্যভিহীন কোনো এক বিদ্যাগ্রন্থ হওয়া যায় না এবং বাহ্যিক অভ্যাস করে ভাষ্যগ্রন্থের সত্যে একশেষ পরিণত হন না



Among other European Missionary writers at Śīrāmpur, the name of Rev John Mack, unassuming as

John Mack  
1797-1845

it is, is interesting to the student of the literary history of the time

He was born in March 12, 1797, a native of Edinburgh, his father having been a writer to the signet. He was educated at the Edinburgh University and distinguished himself at the Baptist College at Bristol. On his visit to England during 1819-21 in search of funds and men for the proposed Serampore College, Ward selected Mack to be a Professor at the College, where the latter arrived in November 1821. Mack worked as a Professor for 16 years, succeeded Maishman in the charge of the College and raised it to be for some time a first-rate private educational institution in Bengal. Mack was highly proficient in Classics, Mathematics and Natural Science, and gave the first chemical lectures (in Bengali as well as in English) in Calcutta. He also shared the editorial management of the *Friend of India* at Śīrāmpur from its commencement. He died of cholera in April 30, 1845.

Mack's only, and in certain respects noteworthy, contribution to Bengali consists of a treatise on Chemistry, the first of its kind in Bengali, named কেমিস্ট্রী বিদ্যাবসার। শ্রীযুত জন মাক সাহেবেব কর্তৃক রচিত হইয়া গোড়ীয় ভাষায় অঙ্কবান্ধিত হইল or the Principles of Chemistry by John Mack translated into Bengalee (Serampore Press 1834). It is divided into 2 parts<sup>1</sup> the first part covering about 337 pages, prefaced by

His scientific writing

an interesting introduction written

তবে অনেক বিদ্যাতে সকলেই কি একারে হঠাৎ পরিপক্ব হইতে পারিবেন।  
(বিদ্যাহারাবলীগ্রন্থ পাঠকেরদের প্রতি মেং ফিলিক্স কেরী সাহেবের পত্রমিদং।)

<sup>1</sup> The second part was never possibly published

in English. It opens with the treatment of *কিম্বদন্তি* *প্রভাব* or chemical forces such as *অকর্ষণ* *তাপক* *আলোক* *বিদ্যুতী* *বাহন* etc. and then goes on to deal with *কিম্বদন্তি* *বস্তু* or chemical substances.<sup>1</sup> Many of the theories and conclusions stated here have long been abandoned but they give us through the medium of Bengali a good picture of the state of the dimly understood chemical science as it obtained eighty years ago. Even after the lapse of more than half a century and with a better understanding and demand of this useful science, it is to be regretted that Bengali language cannot as yet boast of a single good treatise on Chemistry not to speak of scientific literature in general. Yet this missionary with a scanty vocabulary and imperfect command over the language<sup>2</sup> ventured with singular courage

Fi Oxyge Chlorine, Bromine Hydrogen Nitroge Sulphur Phosphorus Carbon, Boron, Selenium. There is also a section on Steam Engine.

It is said in the *Bengal Observer* (p. 50) that Mack's work written in English was translated by F. Carey but this is doubtful. (See also E. O. Wenger *Story of Lalibazar Baptist Church*, 1908). In this connexion, it would be interesting to call attention to the question raised by Mack which I also referred to by F. Carey but of which there seem to have been no satisfactory solution as yet, viz. the question relating to the proper method of compiling a glossary of technical scientific terms in Bengali. We will not enter into the vexed question whether we should take European terms bodily into our language or adapt them to our use by

Sanskrit substitution or otherwise but we may

Glossary of technical terms. be allowed to quote here the opinion of Mack as set forth in the Preface to his work and

let it speak for itself:—The names of

Chemical substances are in the great majority of instances, perfectly new to the Bengali language, as they were but few years ago to all languages. The chief difficulty was to determine whether the European nomenclature should be merely put into Bengalee letters, or the European terms be entirely translated by Sanskrit, as bearing much the same relation to Bengalee as the Greek and Latin do to English,

and noble aim to open up a useful though neglected field of knowledge and culture. We cannot but speak with admiration of the work of these early missionary writers in all departments of useful knowledge, and we may be forgiven if we dwell rather long on this early Bengali treatise on a scientific subject. The object of this publication is thus given in the Preface: "Mr Marshman having proposed some years ago to publish an original series of elementary works on history and science, for the use of youths in India, I count it a privilege to be associated with him in the undertaking and cheerfully promised to furnish such parts of the series as was more intimately connected with my own studies. Other engagements have retarded the execution of our project, much against our will. He has therefore been able to do no more than bring out the first part of his *Brief Survey of History*, and now, at length, I am permitted to add to it this first volume of the *Principles of Chemistry*." With the object of teaching rudiments of the science to the Indian youth in view, Mack thought it best to write his work in Bengali, scarcely fit though it was for the expression of scientific ideas. "Be it understood," he says, "the native youths of India are those for whom we chiefly labour, and their own tongue is the great instrument by which we hope to enlighten them." The book, chiefly meant to be a textbook, for which however its style is difficult enough, was compiled chiefly from the notes of lectures which the writer delivered to his pupils in Calcutta and Shīnāmpur. It is hardly necessary to speak any thing of its language.

I have preferred, therefore, expressing the European terms in Bengalee character, merely changing the words into the prefixes and terminology, so as decently to incorporate the new language." For a sketch of John Mack's life, see Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol. 1, pp. 282-286. Also *Bengal Obituary*.

and manner. We can hardly expect anything better than what we have already seen—for the theme here is science the writer an Englishman and the Bengali is the Bengali of almost a century ago yet it must be noted that the language of this work is more simple and easy certainly than that of Felix Carey or even of some of the more abstruse writers of scientific text books in the present day. One or two specimens are selected here —

অনেক প্রকার বস্তুর কিমিরালর উৎপন্ন হইলে আলোক নির্গত হয়। অতএব যে সময়ে বহন হয় সে সময় সকলেই জানে যে আলোক নির্গত হয় কিন্তু যে বস্তুতে কখন বহনোৎপত্তি হয় না সে বস্তুর লগ্নেতেও আলোক নির্গত হয়।

আলোক কিমিরা প্রভাবের মত কোন ২ বস্তুর পরস্পর লগ্ননিপাতক এবং কোন ২ বস্তুর লগ্ননিপাতক হয়। এই প্রকার কার্য পরে করা যাইবেক। আলোক ও বিদ্যুতীয় সাধন কোন ২ কার্য একত্রণে নিম্নর করে। অপর রঙের তেজোতেও কিন্তু বিশেষ বিগুলা (violet) বর্ণ কিরণেতে সৃষ্টি থাকিলে ক্রমে ২ চূষক প্রভাবের গুণ প্রাপ্ত হয় কিন্তু যে পদীকাতে ইহা হিরীকৃত হয় তৎপরীক্ষাতে কিঞ্চিৎ লগ্নে আছে (p 107 Sec 160-161)।

বৈজ্ঞানিকের দ্বিতীয়াঙ্গিণ। গাণুত্রিক অঙ্গবিশিষ্ট জলের মধ্যে বারিমের পরমাঙ্গিণ দ্বারা গেলে তাহা কতক অঙ্গিজ্ঞান হারাইয়া প্রথম অঙ্গিণ হয় এবং তদবস্থাতে উক্ত অঙ্গিতে লীন হয় এবং উপযুক্ত উপার উপস্থিত হইলে ঐ হারান অঙ্গিজ্ঞান জলের বৈজ্ঞানিকের লীন হইলে তাহাতে জলের দ্বিতীয়াঙ্গিণ আছে (p 177, Sec 268)।

আলোকের চলন ও কার্যের দ্বারা অনেকে বোধ করে যে সে এক প্রকার বস্তু। কিন্তু কোন ২ ব্যক্তি অনুমান করেন যে সে বস্তু নহে কেবল বস্তুর মধ্যগত একপ্রকার বিশেষ সংলগ্ন দ্বারা উৎপন্ন (p 108 Sec. 150)

Of the other missionaries, who belonged to the Baptist Mission and wrote some tracts and text-books, it is not necessary to dwell long upon the names of Lawson,

John Lawson Robinson, Wengel or Pearce. John

Lawson (1787-1825) wrote a treatise on Natural History called পঞ্চাবলী which was published by the School Book Society before 1821<sup>1</sup>

John Robinson

John Robinson, some time editor of the *Evangelist*, translated Robinson Crusoe,<sup>2</sup> Bunyan's

Holy War, and Carey's Grammar

John Wengel

into Bengali John Wengel,<sup>3</sup> (1811-1880) who was an associate of Dr Yates and revised his Bengali Bible (1861), edited the *Upadeśakā*, compiled a Bengali Grammar, translated Maishman's History,<sup>4</sup> and wrote or edited a few tracts and school-books

<sup>1</sup> It was in six numbers, viz 1 The Lion and the Jackal (subsequently published as বিহের বিবরণ) 2 The Bear 3 The Elephant 4 The Rhinoceros and the Hippopotamus 5 The Tiger 6 The Cat For a sketch of Lawson's life, see Carey, *Orient Christ Biography* (vol II pp 415-425)

<sup>2</sup> (১) রবিন্সন ক্রুসো'র জীবন চবিত or the Adventures of Robinson Crusoe translated by J R and illustrated with woodcuts 2nd ed 1885 pp 1-261 (২) ধর্মযুদ্ধের বৃত্তান্ত, অর্থাৎ আশুবিদ্য বিপ্লব ও সমতান প্রভৃতি সমস্ত খ্রীষ্টীয় লোকেরদের বেরূপ যুদ্ধ হয় তাহার বিবরণ। জ্ঞান বাণন সাহেবের রচিত ও রবিন্সন সাহেবেব কর্তৃক অনুবাদিত হইয়া শ্রীবাগপুরে যন্ত্রালয়ে মুদ্রাঙ্কিত হইল। ১৮৫৯। (Second Edition, 1859) illustrated also by woodcuts, pp 1-316 Also wrote গঙ্গার খালের সংক্ষেপ বিবরণ or an Account of the Ganges Canal, pp 1-19, 1854<sup>2</sup> This Robinson must not be confounded with another Robinson who was Government Inspector of Schools in Assam and wrote a work on mensuration called ভূমি পরিমাপ (or Elements of Land Surveying) in 1850 which was reviewed in the *Friend of India* of Sept 12, 1850

<sup>3</sup> See Buckland's *Dictionary of Indian Biography*

<sup>4</sup> See p 249 footnote ante

William Hopkins Pearce (1794-1840) who came out to India (1811) as an assistant of Ward and subsequently joined the Calcutta Baptist Printing Establishment was for several years editor of the *Christian Observer* and wrote a few school books <sup>1</sup> and Christian tracts. He is chiefly remembered now for his interest in education and his connexion with School Book Society in which he succeeded Dr Yates as secretary.

But the name of William Yates cannot be passed over so lightly. Dr Yates son of a shoe-maker and himself a village school master for some time was born at Loughborough Dec. 15 1792. He entered the Baptist College at Bristol where he studied the Oriental languages and came out to India on April 16 1815 under the patronage of the Baptist Missionary Society. He joined Carey at Srirampur studied Sanscrit and Bengali under him and helped him extensively in his literary work. In 1817 he left Carey and joined the Baptist Society at Calcutta.

His works among other things, are — (1) *ভূগোল বৃত্তান্ত* | অর্থাৎ যোনাথান পুথিবীর বৈশিষ্ট্য ও নদী ও পর্বত ও নগর আর হাঙ্গর ও ধর্ম ও সমুদ্র সম্বন্ধে বাণিজ্য ও আধুনিক সভ্য ইতিহাস ইত্যাদি বিষয় or Geography interspersed with information historical and miscellaneous for the use of schools in 6 parts Calcutta 1818 Ed in 1822; also 1843 (2) *সত্য আশ্রয়* | *ইহী পথের উত্তরে কথোপকথন* or the True Refuge; a Christian tract, Calcutta 1822 W H Pearce must not be confounded with G Pearce who wrote or edited (1) *কল্যাণিক ইতিহাস* | 1838 (2) *বাইবেলের পাঠ্যপুস্তক* or Companion to the Bible translated by Rā Kṛṣṇa Kābīāj and revised by G Pearce. 1846 (3) *দৈবদর্শি নিষারক পত্র* | or Foolish Galatians or I constancy in Faith exposed and Antidote supplied (pp 1-59) Calcutta 1845 For more detail about W H Pearce's life and writing see *Life of W H Pearce* by William Yates; *Bengal Obituary* pp 221-223 *Missionary Herald*, 1828; *Carey Oriental Christ Biography* vol III pp 1-14 (a list of his works given at p 10)

becoming pastor of the English Church at Circular Road in 1829-30. In 1824 he became Secretary of the School Book Society and got large opportunities for carrying out his educational projects. His educational works received considerable encouragement from Government which not only subsidised him but offered him a stipend of £1,000 on condition of his devoting himself to such work an offer which he declined <sup>1</sup>. He died at sea on July 3, 1845. His works in Bengali are numerous but they were all published between 1817 and 1827 and consist chiefly of

1 The New Testament translated, 1833 Ed in 1839

2 The Holy Bible in Bengali 1845 pp 1-1144 (subsequently revised by J. Wenger and C. B. Lewis in 1861 and 1867) See Appendix II at the end of this volume

3 হিতোপদেশ (expurgated edition) 1841

4 পদার্থ বিজ্ঞা or Natural Philosophy and History 1824

5 পদার্থ-বিজ্ঞা-সার। অর্থাৎ বাণকেশবদেব পদার্থ শিক্ষার্থে কথোপকথন or Elements of Natural Philosophy and Natural History in a series of familiar dialogues designed for the instruction of Indian youth Calcutta 1825 2nd Ed 1834 Published by the School Book Society <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For more details about his life and work see James Hoby, *Memoir of William Yates* (1847), *Dictionary of National Biography*, *Bengal Obituary*, pp 222-225, *Dictionary of British and Foreign Authors*, vol III, *Cal. Chr. Observ.* 1845, *Eclectic Review*, vol IV, *Cal. Rev.*, vol X, p 162 et seq, *Catalogue of British and Foreign Bible Society*, 1857, p 332, etc, W. H. Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol I pp 29, 48, *India Review*, vol VII, 1843, pp 740-743, in which will be found an excellent likeness of Dr Yates by Grant

<sup>2</sup> This work, although on a scientific subject, avoids scientific technicalities as much as possible and constitutes an eminently readable popular exposition of the broad topics of Natural Philosophy and History and is indeed the first of its kind

6 *Introduction to the Bengalee Language* in two volumes 1840 2nd Ed by J Wenger 1847 Containing a grammar a reader and explanatory notes with an index (in vol I) and selections from Bengali literature (in vol II The author's Preface says that it consists of two volumes the first of which is chiefly of European and the second entirely of native composition " The first volume contains a grammar select reading lessons consisting of simple sentences fables anecdotes etc while the second contains in a condensed and corrected form the best parts of all the native (mostly prose) compositions in Bengali The selections are from Totā Itihās (18 tales) Lipumālā

The style and manner are more narrative than philosophical or scientific. The form is that of a dialogue between a teacher and his pupil who is curious to acquire an insight into the mysteries of the natural phenomena. This work is chiefly compiled from Martinet's Catechism of Nature and Baley's Useful Knowledge. The subjects embraced are too many but they are dealt with in a popular and rather summary way. After giving in the first few chapters some account of the mysteries of the Heavens (আকাশের গুহ্য বিষয়) and the atmosphere (হির বায়ু ও পানীয় বায়ু ও বাষ্পীয় সৃষ্টির বিশেষ কথন) the teacher discourses on the earth (পৃথিবীর ও মানুষের বিষয়) and the human being (মনুষ্য বিষয়ক কথা) and then goes on from the sixth dialogue to the description of the animal and the vegetable kingdoms, concluding with a few words on the minerals and on the products of various countries. Here is a specimen both of its science and its style —

শিষ্য। নক্ষত্রগুলির যে বর্ণন হয় সেটা কি ?

গুরু। সে নক্ষত্রগুলি নয় কিন্তু সূর্য্য সৃষ্টিপথের যে কোন বস্তুর বাষ্প আকারে উঠে তাহার মাধ্যম দ্বারা প্রতিটি হওয়াতে তাহা প্রকাশিত হয় তাহাতে যে পর্য্যন্ত সে সকল বস্তু না হয় তাবৎ প্রকৃত বর্ণন হয়।

শিষ্য। প্রাণিকালে যে আলোর বর্ণন হয় সে কি ?

গুরু। অনুমান হয় বাহ্যতে অগ্নির যোগ আছে এমন কোন বায়ু বিশেষ হইবে কিবা বৃত্ত বৃত্ত ও পত্র হইতে নির্গত কোন সত্ত্বের বস্তু অগ্নির কণিকার যোগ হওয়াতে প্রকাশিত হয়। (2nd edition p 14)





Of the other Missionary Societies the London Mission which came into being a little later took some part in the encouragement of the vernacular and promotion of education through that medium. Many of its missionaries in these early days of text book writing composed numerous educational works of value and usefulness but it would be sufficient for our purpose if we take into consideration the names Robert May J Harley J D Pearson and James Keith. The first three of these missionaries however whose names are linked together like those of the three great Śrīrāmpur brethren are remembered not so much for their literary efforts as in connexion with their numerous flourishing vernacular schools established between Kalna and Chinsurah. In July 1814 Robert May<sup>1</sup> with a very narrow income opened a free vernacular school in his dwelling house at Chinsurah but within a year he succeeded in establishing fifteen more schools with 951

Robert May  
1768 1818

*Bengal Observatory* (p 223) adds *Pleasant Tales* *Epitome of Ancient History* (also *Hobby* p. cit. p. 311) *Civilized Characters of Ancient History* a translation of Bunyan *Pilgrim's Progress* Pt. I and of Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted* (Also Murdoch *Catalogue*) Besides these Yates, like many other missionaries mentioned here, wrote numerous Christian Tracts. He also wrote a *Bengalee Grammar* ed. Wengor Calcutta, 1849 See W H. Carey *Oriental Christian Biography* vol I p 44; also *India Retiree* vol vii 1848

See *Asiatic Journal* vol. III 1817 p 500; *Bengal Observatory* p 208; *Cal. Rec.* vol 1850 rt *Bengal Literature & Language*; Lushington, *History, Design & Present State of Benevolent Institutions or new Calcutta* 1824 pp 143-155; Long *Introduction to Adam's Reports* pp. 1-6; Long's *Handbook to the Bengal Missions*; W H Carey *Oriental Christian Biography* vol III pp. 294-298 For John Harley see W H Carey *op cit.*, p. 134 et seq

scholars and obtained the patronage of Lord Hastings. Mr May however was soon cut off by death but his colleagues Messrs Hailey and Pearson, who also belonged to the same society, succeeded in keeping up his work by the offer of their services. Robert May<sup>1</sup> compiled in 1817 an arithmetical table on the native model which was popularly known for a long time as *May-Ganita*.

Hailey supplemented May's work by his *Ganitānka* or গণিতাঙ্ক (Chinsurah, 1819) compiled on a mixed model.<sup>2</sup> Pearson's works however, were of greater value and effect than any of these. He was a very industrious and voluminous writer and it is difficult to draw up a complete list of his writings, of which the following seem to be the more important ones.

(1) গণিতপত্রিকা or Letters on Familiar Subjects containing 260 letters on domestic, commercial, and familiar subjects, zemindary accounts, and other forms in common use. 1819 6th ed in 1852 (Published by the School Book Society)

(2) পাঠশালাবিদ্যাবলী or Schoolmaster's Manual (Published by the School Book Society) 1819 Explains the Bell and Lancaster system

<sup>1</sup> On the epitaph over Robert May's remains are written the following words "In his life he was especially engaged in promoting the best interests of the rising generation, by whom his name will long be held in endearing recollection" (*Bengal Obituary*, p 298) গণিত (Gonito) or a Collection of Arithmetical Tables by R. May in Bengali, 8vo Calcutta 1821 See *Catalogue E I Co's Library* (1845), p 268

<sup>2</sup> See also the works cited above in p 263 footnote <sup>1</sup> Also see Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, vol 1, pp 368-71 May's and Hailey's Arithmetic were republished by the School Book Society

(3) বাক্যাবলী or Idiomatical Exercises. English and Bengalee with dialogues, letters etc on various subjects Calcutta 1820 A phrase-book and vocabulary Published by the School Book Society (Ed Cal 1829)

(4) নীতিকথা or Moral Tales composed jointly with Raja Rādhākānta Deb for the School Book Society Before 1821

(5) Translation of Murray's English Grammar 1820 [Mentioned also in *Catalogue E I Company's Library* (p 267) as 'Grammar of the English Language English and Bengalee Calcutta 1820']

(6) প্রাচীন ইতিহাসের সমুচ্চয় or an Epitome of Ancient History English and Bengalee containing a concise account of the Egyptians Assyrians Persians Grecians and Romans The English compiled by Pearson the Bengali version by Pearson and others Calcutta 1830 pp 1 623 (A previous edition containing only 304 pages with the accounts of the Egyptians, Assyrians Babylonians Medes Persians and the Grecians)

(7) ভূগোল ও ঐতিহ্য ইত্যাদি বিষয়ক কথোপকথন English and Bengali 1st ed 1824 2nd ed Calcutta 1827

(8) দুই মহা আজ্ঞা or the Two Great Commandments being an exposition of St Matthew xxii 37 Calcutta 1826

(9) We find the following entry in Murdoch *Catalogue* Pilgrim's Progress Bengali and English by Rev J D Pearson chiefly from the Serampore Edition, 1834 2nd Ed Bengali alone An Edition published by J Wenger in 1853 <sup>1</sup>

(10) In the *Catalogue of E I Company's Library* (1845) p 267 mention is made of A School Dictionary English and Bengali 12mo Calcutta 1829

See also W H Carey *Oriental Christian Biography* vol i, p. 370 for a list of Pearson's works.

Of Rev James Keith, who came out to India in 1816 and belonged to the London Mission at Calcutta, it is said that "during his short career, in conjunction with Rev H Townly<sup>1</sup> he laid the foundation of a mission in the metropolis of India". His chief works, educational or biblical are (i) *এক জন খৃষ্টান ও এক দাঁড়ী* এই উভয়দেহের মধ্যে or a Dialogue between a porter and a gardener. A Christian tract. 2nd ed., pp 1-19. Serampore 1820. 3rd ed considerably modified, pp 1-20. Calcutta 1835. (ii) *বাংলাদেশের শিক্ষার্থে সংকলিত প্রাথমিক বাংলায় বর্ণমালা* or a Grammar of the Bengali language adapted to the young in easy questions and answers. Calcutta 1825, pp 1-68. 3rd ed. Calcutta 1839. Published by the School Book Society.

<sup>1</sup> Henry Powelly was also a tract writer in Bengali. Among his works may be mentioned (1) *কোন শাস্ত্র নাননো* or What Scriptures should be regarded, a Christian tract in the form of a dialogue between a Christian and a Hindu. Serampore 1820. (1d C C T and B S 1836) pp 1-12. (2) *একজন খৃষ্টানের সহিত একজন দরবারের বঙ্গোপকথন*. 2nd ed., pp 1-16 (C C T and B S).

<sup>2</sup> See *Bengal Obituary*, pp 67-68. *Asiatic Journal*, 1817, vol. iii, p 500.

<sup>3</sup> Dinesh Ch Sen (*History*, p 870) erroneously styles the author as Kent and his Grammar as Ket-Vyakaran. The date given by him is 1820. It seems the book was not available to him when he wrote this account, for otherwise this mistake is absurd. In *Catalogue of P. I. Co's Library*, mention is also made of *Natikotha* or Fables in Bengali by J. Keith. Calcutta 1828. A specimen of the method and style of the Grammar is given below —

Interjections or আবেগোক্তি বিষয় ।

১ প্রশ্ন । আবেগোক্তিতে কি বুঝা যায়

উত্তর । তাহাতে বক্তার শক্তি প্রশংসা বুঝা যায়, যথা আঃ কি দুঃখ । উঃ কি ভাল । ইঃ কি বেদনা ।

ওগো ওরে ওহে, আরে এবে ওলো এই সকল আবেগোক্তি দুবহু ব্যক্তির পূর্বে উক্ত হয় যথা ওগো বাবা ওরে রামহরি ।

It is not worth while to linger long over the names of other minor missionary or non missionary writers who wrote religious tracts and educational text-books for to give an exhaustive account of their names and writings would be to enumerate a Homeric catalogue <sup>1</sup> We may however mention in passing the names of Herklotte <sup>2</sup> Sutherland <sup>3</sup> and Sandya <sup>4</sup> who wrote chiefly on Geography of Kempbell <sup>5</sup> and Kneane <sup>6</sup> whose contributions were mostly historical of Mundy <sup>7</sup> Rouse <sup>8</sup> Hoeberlin <sup>9</sup> and Townly <sup>10</sup> who were religious controversialists of

যে, হে রে লো, এই সকল আবেশোক্তি বর্তমান যুক্তির অগ্রে উক্ত হয়। যথা  
শিতা যো, হরি তে স্তুতি রে ছুঁকি লো। (p. 41) It is curious to note such  
expressions occurred as আমি করা দিবাছি (p. 38) আমি করা গেলাম (p. 63)

The activity of the Calcutta School Book and of School Society as well as the writings of authors like the Rev. K. M. Banerji is not treated here because properly speaking they belong to a subsidiary movement in literature which came into relief a decade later than the movement inaugurated by the missionaries of Srirampur or the Pundits of Fort William College.

A Map of the World in Bengali by Rev. Gregory Herklotte of Ohinsurah. 1841

Geography of India by J. Sutherland.

General Geography in Bengali by Sandya, 1841.

Taylor's History of the Jews translated into Bengali, 1843.  
pp. 125

Parasik Itibās

বাইবেল একান্তি বর্ণের সহিত হিন্দুশ্রোত্রের শাস্ত্রোক্ত বর্ণের তুলনা বিষয়ক  
পুস্তক or Christianity and Hinduism (2 pts. pp. 1230 Cal. 1828) by  
George Mundy G. Mundy was attached to C. M. S. at Ohinsurah  
latterly a pastor of the Coolie Bazar Chapel. d. 1853.

He also revised the Bengali Bible (1809) He wrote many tracts  
of which may be mentioned প্রদীপ্ত শিক্ষাবিষয়ক উপদেশাবলী or Plain  
Sermons on Christian Doctrine pp. 1148. 1881

বর্ষ পুস্তকের বৃত্তান্ত Bible Stories translated from the German  
of Dr. Christian Gottlieb Barth by Mr. Hoeberlin. With 2<sup>nd</sup> illustrations.  
pp. 132 1810

See p. 260 footnote

Miller,<sup>1</sup> Mendies<sup>2</sup> and Rozario<sup>3</sup> who were lexicographers, of Yule,<sup>4</sup> Weithrecht, Rodt<sup>5</sup> and Bomwetsch<sup>6</sup> who composed easy reading lessons for children in schools. We may similarly pass over the names of William Morton,<sup>7</sup> a miscellaneous tract and text-book writer, of David Carmichael Smyth,<sup>8</sup> author of a treatise

<sup>1</sup> Bengali Dictionary 1801 (Long and Broom's). A copy without title page in Sālutsa Paribhat Library.

<sup>2</sup> An abridgement of Johnson's Dictionary in English and Bengali, calculated for the use of Native as well as European students to which is subjoined a short list of French and Latin words and phrases in common use among English authors (Serampore Mission Press 1822) by John Mendies. To Vol II is appended an Introduction to Bengali Language. Serampore 1828.

<sup>3</sup> Bengali Dictionary, 1817.

<sup>4</sup> শিষ্ট বাক্যোদয় or Spelling Book with short sentences and verses.

<sup>5</sup> শিষ্ট শিষ্ট or Object Lessons, 1852.

<sup>6</sup> (a) জ্ঞান দ্বিগোদয়: অর্থাৎ বাবদ ফরদ বোধবিদ্যাদ বিদ্যাবিদ্যাদ বিদ্যাবি  
বৃত্তান্ত। pp 1-92 Calcutta 1813. (b) জ্ঞানবিদ্যোদয়: অর্থাৎ বাবদ শিষ্ট  
বদ্যবায় বর্ণনান। pp 1-16 Calcutta 1811. (c) কৃষ্ণিনা, ন।। a Christian  
tract (see *Bengal Obituary*, p 68). Rev. Randolph de Rodt (1811-1843)  
was attached to the London Missionary Society. "Came out to India  
April 11, 1826. (See Carey, *Oriental Christian Biography*, p 180.)

<sup>7</sup> ৩০ পাঠ। or Thirty Reading Lessons for the use of Children  
in Bengali Christian Schools (pp 1-61 Calcutta ১৮৫২) by Rev.  
Christian Bomwetsch.

<sup>8</sup> (a) Proverbs of Solomon translated 1813. (b) Biblical and  
Theological Vocabulary, English and Bengali compiled, by William  
Morton and others, pp 1-31 Calcutta 1815. (c) দৃষ্টান্ত বাণ্য সংগ্রহ or a  
Collection of Proverbs, Bengali and Sanscrit, with their translation and  
application in English, pp 1-160 Calcutta 1832. (d) Dictionary of the  
Bengali Language, with Bengali Synonyms and English interpreta-  
tion Calcutta 1828. (e) তথ্যপ্রকাশ অথ বজ্রসূচী or a Treatise on Idol  
worship and other Hindu observances by Vrajamohon Deb followed by  
translation from Vajrasuchi of Ashwagosha, pp 60, 14 Calcutta,  
1842, by William Morton (Ed in 1843).

<sup>9</sup> জমিদারীর হিসাব or Original Bengalese Zameendaree Account  
accompanied by a translation into English, pp 1-401 Calcutta 1823.  
Smyth died in 1841. See *Bengal Obituary*.

on secondary accounts of George Galloway<sup>1</sup> who translated Gladwin's Pleasant Stories of Captain Stewart<sup>2</sup> the founder of the Bardwan Church Mission and of Dr Hans Heinrich Eduard Roer<sup>3</sup> who rendered into Bengali some of Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare. The name of Sir Graves Champney Haughton the great scholar and orientalist, will detain us for a moment and with this last though not the least important name we close our chapter on the European writers in Bengali.

Sir Graves Champney Haughton son of John Haughton a Dublin physician was born in 1788. He was educated in England and having obtained a military cadetship on the Bengal Establishment of East India Company he proceeded to India in 1808. In 1812 he joined the Fort William College where he received seven medals three degrees of honour and various pecuniary rewards for his proficiency in Arabic Persian, Hindustani Sanscrit and

মল্লের ইতিহাসিকা or Pleasant Stories of Gladwin's Persian Moonshee translated from the original Persian and English into the Bengalee language Calcutta, printed by D Rozario & Co., 1840

(a) উপদেহ কাথ্য (ইতিহাসের সুবচন) পরন্ত ইংলণ্ডের সাধারন চুখক। or Moral Tales of History with an historical sketch of England and her connexion with India etc (containing selections from L. M. Stretcher's Beauties of History) pp 1-09 Calcutta 1820 Dated wrongly in *Bibliotheca* as appearing in 1810 and entitled ইতিহাসিক কীতিগুণ Dineesh Chandra Sen, *History* (pp 800 and 870) enters the book twice as Upadesha Katha and Moral Tales of History without identifying them  
(b) গিদির মারক or the Destroyer of Darkness a Christian Tract pp 1-20 Published by the Calcutta Christian Tract and Book Society, 1835 For Stewart and Weltbrecht see District Gazetteer vol on Bardwan in the Chap on Education. Also see Long's Introduction to Arminian Reports; Lushington's History etc of Religious and Benevolent Institutions and see Calcutt pp 145-153.

মহাকবি লেখকীয়র প্রদিত মটিকের বহিঃস্থল লেখক টেলের কতিপয় আখ্যায়িকা or Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare, translated by E Roer pp 1-1 Calcutta 1833 (Bengal Family Library Series)



Bengali In 1815 his ill-health compelled him to leave for England In 1817 he was appointed Professor of Oriental Languages at Haileybury where he continued till 1827 <sup>1</sup> Haughton took great interest in the foundation of the Royal Society in London of which he was an oriental member and honorary secretary from 1831 to 1833 He died of cholera at St Cloud, near Paris, on August 28, 1849 <sup>2</sup>

Haughton was more of a scholar than a littérateur and his works in Bengali have a philological rather than a purely literary interest His works, chiefly useful compilations, consisted of (1) *Rudiments of Bengalee Grammar* (in English) London 1821, pp 1-168 It was composed by order of the Court of Directors and was based mainly on the works of Halhed and Carey (2) *Bengalee Selections* (from Chandīcharan's translation of Totā Itihās, from Mrtyuñjay's Bengali version of Hindi Simhāsana Battisi, and from Harapiasād Rāy's translation of Bidyāpati's Sanscrit Purus-parīksā with translation into English and a vocabulary pp 1-198 London 1822 Edition by D Forbes, London, 1869 (3) *Glossary*, Bengali and English, to explain the Totā Itihāsa, the Batīs Simhāsan, the History of Rājā Kṛṣṇa Chandra, the Purus Parīksā, and the Hitopadeś pp 1-124 London 1825 (4) *A Bengalee-English Dictionary* compiled by order of the Court of Directors London 1833 These useful works, once held in great esteem, are still valuable, but it is rather the Bengali language than Bengali literature which owes its debt of gratitude to Haughton

<sup>1</sup> *Royal Kalendar*, 1818, p 293, *ibid*, 1820, p 282

<sup>2</sup> For further informations, see *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1833, pt II, p 76, biographical notice in *ibid*, 1849, pt II, p 420, Annual Rept of the Royal Asiatic Soc for May 1850 in vol XIII of *Journal*, pp II & , Wilson's *Dublin Directory*, 1790, p 121, *Alumni Oxonienses*, 1715-1886 II 626, Allibone's *Dict of British and American Authors* 1872, vol I

## CHAPTER IX

### GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

We have now closed the survey of a period of 19th century literature in Bengal which is covered principally by European writers and their colleagues and which if not the greatest, is at least one of the most important in its literary history for although not rich in positive accomplishment this and the period

General remarks on the characteristics of the European writers and their achievement

of transition which followed it had been the great school time of modern literature periods in which the unconscious experiments of Carey

and his colleagues were made expanded and multiplied sometimes with the conscious purpose of developing a prose *style* and always with the practical effect of doing so by writers in the widely diverging branches of literature No other period demonstrates so conclusively the folly or fallacy of the theory already

Importance of this period in literary history

alluded to which would bid us ignore historic estimates and look only to the best things in literature Of such

best things this period has got very little to show its productions with the greatest stretch of literary charity can hardly be said to touch even the fringe of literature proper To appreciate much less to enjoy the rudimentary publications of this period would require a certain amount of patience and catholicism if not a kind of pre-established harmony of taste in the reader yet the importance of this period is not to be underrated on that account There is no other portion of our modern literature

the study of which can be ignored with greater danger, none the study of which is repaid by a fuller understanding, in regard to the rest. Although it was a stage necessarily unproductive, it was yet the great period of germination, and an acquaintance with it is helpful for the understanding and enjoyment of the rich harvest which our literature had subsequently borne within the last half of the century.

With the old caution about the constant overlapping of tendencies, it would not be wrong to state that this was chiefly a period of European activity in Bengali literature. It is true indeed that there was a strong

and unmastered counter-current of native energy which expressed itself in the songs of the Kabiwalas and

A period of European activity

other products of purely native genius, not the least affected by the new spirit, and that in an historical survey of the literary achievements of this period we cannot very well ignore the significance of these forms of indigenous literature, yet when we consider the Europeanised tendency of modern Bengali literature,

its new literary method and new mode of expression, we cannot but give a greater prominence to European activity and spread of European

Counter currents of native energy, how related to it

ideas. The older traditions still continued to live on, and an antagonism between the old and the new spirit is traceable throughout the literary history of the 19th century, for the mental progress of a nation cannot prove itself altogether independent of the fatality of hereditary transmission. But we give greater importance to the Europeans because it is the spirit of their work, aided no doubt by the inexorable hand of circumstances, which was to dominate in the end and determine

the final bent of modern literature. In spite of the natural persistence of old methods and old forms access was obtained to new methods and new forms and the tide of literary fashion began to flow in other and more novel directions with the advent of European writers and European ideas in the field.

The description which suggests itself for the quarter of a century from 1800 to 1825 is that of the early or first

Its transitional character and the changes it brought about.

Transition Period for it marks the first great advance from the old to the new although another period of progress was necessary to bring

about in its fulness the dawn of modern literary Bengali. The changes of the period are many and far reaching and everywhere transitional in character. In politics and social affairs the conflict between the old and the new was gradually taking shape and there was unrest and uncertainty everywhere consequent upon such conflict. In linguistic matters we find not only profit and loss in details of vocabulary but also an innovation in the direction of a simpler syntax. But in literature although the ancient trend of thought and feeling was to some extent being continued in the popular Kabi songs and other indigenous forms of literature the British contact did not fail to bring about changes of the gravest kind in relation to its material its form, and its literary temper. The field of literary adventures was enlarged and since the tentative efforts resulting from these innovations took for the most part, the form of their models radical changes in literary form became palpable. The changes in the literary temper were so subtle and varied that no summary description would be adequate but that it was marked by a greater desire for individual liberty. The age became more and more articulate and forthwith res

ponded to contemporary influences. The old schools were being upset and the representative character of the old literature which was becoming more and more urbane and and artificially limited to a select few, who could appreciate its new ideas and novel forms, was lost in the attempt, mostly by untainted hands, to imitate foreign literary methods and models.

Leaving aside the indigenous forms of literature for separate treatment, the first portion of this period (1800-1815), which was indeed a stage of timid experiment, was for the most part a period of European authorship, varied by occasional imitations by scarcely original native authors, the chief centre of literary publication being the

Fort William College. We have

The College of Fort William

traced at some length the connexion of this college with the history and

growth of Bengali literature in the early years of British settlement, and its importance cannot be gainsaid. It was here indeed that modern Bengali literature, especially Bengali prose, received its first exercising ground and without its co-operation it is doubtful whether even the Śrīnāmpur Mission, an institution equally important to Bengali literature, could have achieved the remarkable success which it actually did. The two institutions, the Fort William College and the Śrīnāmpur Mission, founded at the same time yet so dissimilar to each other

in their aim and object, found them-

and the Śrīnāmpur Mission

selves connected with each other by at least one bond of close kinship,

namely, the encouragement which both afforded to the study of Bengali. We shall realise how close this relationship was when we bear in mind that almost all the publications of the College were printed at the Śrīnāmpur Press and that, on the other hand, it was the Mission which sup-

plied the College with scholars and professors of Bengali. In this respect each supplemented the work of the other. Indeed before the missionaries came in contact with the College of Fort William through the appointment of Carey as Professor of Bengali their work in the field of Bengali prose had been very slight. In the meantime they had only succeeded in translating and printing off the Bengali Bible but in this again they had rendered only a doubtful service to Bengali prose. The Mission was too poor and too insignificant to undertake extensive literary work of a permanent kind and on 'political and other grounds the missionaries had all along been held in disfavour. The first political recognition of the Mission and its worthy object with reference to the study

Government encouragement.

of Bengali came with the appointment of Dr Carey as Professor in Lord Wellesley's newly established

College. Under the patronage pecuniary and otherwise, of the College a fresh impetus was given to the study of Bengali. But even then the stringent regulations which had fettered the press in India and other political restrictions stood in the way of intellectual progress and it was not until another decade or so had passed that a more liberal and far-sighted policy was adopted. It may also be noted here that the benefit rendered to Bengali by all these early institutions was never direct but came indirectly and therefore with occasional fluctuations through their encouragement of the study of the language itself on political and other utilitarian grounds.

European patronage ; its effects

both loss and gain to Bengali Literature. It is dangerous to dogmatise about influences but it cannot be denied that speaking generally it was the intellectual

stimulus given by the British contact which raised Bengali Literature out of the slough of general decadence into which it had been plunged after the death of Bhārat-chandīa. The vernacular was raised

Stimulating influence  
of British contact

if not above, at least on the same level with, the classical languages,

which had hitherto held the undisputed sway. But the literature of Bengal, which had hitherto belonged to the people in general, shifted its centre of activity from the peaceful village-homes to the crowded cities and the metropolis, and under the patronage of an alien lettered class, imbued with new ideas and novel methods, it lost its representative character, its primitive colouring, and its pristine simplicity.

But the literature  
losing its primitive  
colouring

It is true that the literary spirit of the people, even though arrested temporarily, never died out and that

the last echoes of the great Baisnab and Śākta writers still lingered faintly in their less worthy successors, the *Kabīrwalas*, the *Ītīāḥars*, the *Kāḥakās* or the *Pāñchālīkās*, through whom they have coloured even our modern ways of thought, yet when the literature revived, with the creation of a new lettered class and a new public, it revived "with a difference."

It will be seen, however, that this era of Bengali literature is essentially an era of prose and one of its greatest achievements is indeed the creation of modern prose-of-all-work. The prose of the first decade of the century, however, that we are passing in review, has

An era of prose, its  
formal importance

little or nothing delectable to a mere literary taste, but to the critical student it possesses great interest and

importance. For this was indeed the beginning of Bengali prose properly so called, for before 1800, it may

be doubted whether, in spite of the large number of old philosophical and religious prose-works now discovered there is a single Bengali prose work of any importance which unites the bulk and literary quality of a book proper. It is true indeed that the prose of the early 19th century (chiefly tentative in character) is comparatively clumsy, inartistic, but its formal importance in literary history can never be denied and even within this shapeless mass there is a full pulse of life that may be detected by any careful reader who does not associate old book with mummies. But in order to appreciate this importance, we must at the outset obtain some idea of the conditions under which it came about and developed so rapidly within a few years.

Modern Bengali prose, like modern Bengal itself came into being under anomalous conditions. After the death of Bhārat-chandra and with the disappearance of the great Baignab

The conditions under which modern Bengali prose came into being

and Śukta writers the literature of Bengal was left to shift for itself uncontrolled by the power of any individual native genius which alone by dwelling apart in an age of conflicting influences could have helped to guide

and its subjection to conflicting influences with the disappearance of the old school.

it. The European writers who took the lead in the matter at the beginning of the 19th century had little experience of Bengali and much loss of Bengali literature in matters

of composition they took as their guide not the ancient writers of Bengal, who were by this time hopelessly entombed in a mass of old inaccessible

(1) The *Bhattachār* yes; their language (বিশ্বকোষ)

manuscripts, but the great *Bhattachāryas* or *Ṭol* pundits who on account of their classical accomplishments, were thought fit to write in the vernacular tongue



But these learned pundits, who traded upon the general ignorance of the people and treated the vernacular with contempt, knew nothing of our past literature, but with a confidence born of untraining and in their eagerness to display their classical learning, they affected a pedantic Sanscritised style which was more than what the language could bear. Their

Their classical learning and pedantry, and total ignorance of the vernacular literature

very erudition proved their greatest disqualification, and their unwieldy style and its uncouth form, betraying all the absurd defects of an untrained hand, were wholly out of accord with the genius of the language. To handle these matters properly there is needed a poise so perfect that the least overweight in any direction tends to destroy the balance. The Duke of Wellington said of a certain peer that "it was a great pity his education had been so far too much for his abilities." In like manner, one often sees the erudition of these pundits prove too much for their abilities. In justice to these learned pundits, however, it must be said that some of them honestly believed in the efficacy of the Sanscritised style, which was supposed to add dignity to the flat and colourless vernacular and that if they did not write easily, they wrote

Partiality for Sanscrit and absurdly Sanscritised style

correctly only this partiality for Sanscrit or use of সাধুভাষা (high style) was often carried to the extreme. We have seen how the learned author of

*Prabodh-chandrīkā* at the beginning of his work extols Sanscrit as the best of all languages<sup>1</sup>, but he prefers to write in Bengali inasmuch as it is the best of the vernaculars on account of the preponderance of Sanscrit in it (অন্যান্য দেশীয় ভাষা হইতে গৌড়দেশীয় ভাষা উত্তম। সর্বোত্তমা সংস্কৃতভাষাবাহুল্য

<sup>1</sup> See extract quoted at p 218

(২২২ক) This may be taken fairly as the opinion of the Bhaṭṭāchāryas generally who now made it their province to patronise Bengali. In Bk II Chap I of the same work again Mṛtyuñjay while discoursing on the beauties and defects of prose style quotes and analyses the following sentences as exhibiting various rhetorical qualities—

কামিনী কাকী মণীর মতু সিমিত করে

Specimen of the  
kind of style they  
favoured

(প্রসাদগুণ)। নীলমণ্ডল ক্রীড়ামরোচ্ছ

হেমাদম পীনপরোধর স্মরণমুখী মনমুগীত

গোচনা মনমহালসবিলাসিনী তনুভরনমিতাদী শুকনিতমভাসমধরা  
মলয়নন্দনগন্ধবাহ কোকিলকল কুমিত বসন্তকুমারমোহনরতীকৃত বিত্তমুখ  
(উদারমুখ)। অস্তপর্কিত মস্তকপর্ষায পর্ষাৎ পর্ষাকপর্ব কিরণরূপ  
বসনা বে বাহুগী দিক্ সে পীনতনুগন্থিত নির্মলভাসকএবএ তরুণীর  
তুল্য শোভা গাইতেছে (গজগুণ)। কোকিলকলকলাগাণবাচাল বে  
মলয়ানিল সে উচ্ছলজীকরাভ্যাজ নিবরাষ্টকলাজর হইয়া আসিতেছে  
(সাম্যগুণ)। (প্রবোধচন্দ্রিকা দ্বিতীয় ভবক প্রথম কুসুম)।

These examples would clearly indicate the kind of style which was highly favoured and the length to which this Sanscritisation was carried :

But long before the Bhaṭṭāchāryas affected this stiff laboured and pedantic diction another style of expression chiefly favoured by the court-going or commercial *Lāgasthas* was already extensively prevalent and sometimes found its way into the

(২) The *Kāyasthas*;  
their language (কায়  
স্তী ভাষা)

more serious compositions of the time. It was a kind of half Bengali and half Persian diction which was

Of these pundits Mṛtyuñj y though he affected an artificially correct and learned diction was fully alive to the sense of style and knew the value of appropriate phrasing. In one place, he writes in

the language of the court and the market-place and of which we have seen a subdued specimen in the style of *Pratāpāditya Charitra* Ever since the time of Mohammed-

dan conquest, Persian words and expressions or their modified Urdu forms <sup>1</sup> were gradually finding their way into the Bengali vocabulary,

and the necessity of their being used, more or less, in everyday conversation, no doubt facilitated the process.

By the time the *Chandī* of Kabikankan was composed Persian was already extensively used even in the verse-compositions of the period The

*Chandī* of Kabikankan following quotation, in which in nine verses more than eighteen Persian

words will be found, will show in how short a time Bengali put on a novel aspect through its admixture with Persian

সহব লিঙ্গিবাজ

তাহাতে মজ্জনবাজ

নিবসে নিয়োগী গোপীনাথ।

তাহাব তালুকে বনি

দামিতায় চাষ চষি

নিবাস পুরুষ ছয় শাত ॥

his quaint way শাস্ত্রে বাক্যকে গো শব্দে যে কহিয়াছেন তাহাব কারণ এই ভাষা যদি সম্যকরূপে প্রয়োগ করা যায় তবে স্বয়ং কামতুখাদেমু হন যদি ছুটরূপে প্রয়োগ করা যায় তবে সেই ছুট ভাষা খনিষ্ঠগোত্রধর্মকে স্বপ্রয়োগকর্তা হইতে অর্পণ করিয়া স্ববক্তাকে গোত্রপে পণ্ডিতবদেব নিকটে বিখ্যাত করেন। আর বাক্য কহা বড় কঠিন মকল-হইতে কহা যায় না কেন না কেহ বাক্যেতে হাতি পায় কেহ বা বাক্যেতে হাতির পায়। অতএব বাক্যেতে অত্যন্ত দোষও কোন প্রকারে উপেনীয় নহে কেন না যতপি অতিবড় হুল্লরও শবীর হয় তথাপি যৎকিঞ্চিৎ একশিত্ত রোগ দোষেতে নিলনীয় হয় (প্রবোধ চন্দ্রিকা, প্রথম স্তবক, চতুর্থ কুণ্ডল, পৃঃ ২৪)।

<sup>1</sup> A pretty good but by no means exhaustive list of Arabic and Persian words used in Bengali will be found in *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, vol viii, also vol xii

ধস্ত রাধা মানসিংহ বিকৃপসে বেগা ভূত  
 গৌড়-বঙ্গ উৎকল-মড়োপ ।  
 অপরী বাজার কালে প্রজার পাশেব ফলে  
 গিলাং পাশ মামুদ সবিশ ।  
 উল্লীর হইলা রাহমান। ব্যাপারীয়ে বেগ বেগা  
 স্রাম্পল বৈষ্ণব হলো অবি ।  
 মাপে গোপে দিয়া দড়া শোনের কাঠার কুড়া  
 নাহি তনে প্রজার গোছারি ।  
 সরকার হটলা কাল বিল ভূমি লেখে লাগ  
 বিনা উপকায়ে যায় হুতি ।  
 পোন্ধর হইল বম টাকা আড়াই আনা কম  
 পাই লভ্য নয় দিন প্রতি ।  
 ডিহিদার অবোধ ধোত কড়ি দিলে নাহি বোত  
 ধাত্ত গোর কেহ নাহি কেনে ।  
 প্রভু গোপীনাথ নন্দী নিশাকে হইলা বন্দী  
 হেতু কিছু নাহি পরিজ্ঞানে ।  
 কোতোলিয়া বড় পাশ সত্ৰনেব কাল সাপ  
 কড়ির কারণে বহু মারে ।  
 আপালি পাপালি কড়ি লেপাঝোপা নাহি দেড়ি  
 যত দিয়া বেগা নিতে পারে ।  
 জমাদার বসার কাছে প্রজারা পালায় পাছে  
 চরার জুড়িয়া বেগ পান ।  
 প্রজার ব্যাকুল চিত্ত বেচে ধাত্ত গোক নিত্য  
 টাকার জন্য হয় দশ আনা ।  
 সহায় শ্রীনন্দ প । চণ্ডীবাটী বাঘ গা  
 যুক্তি করি পতীর পাব সনে ।  
 দামিড়া ছাড়িয়া বাই সঙ্গে রমানাথ ভাই  
 পথে চণ্ডী দিলা পরশনে ।<sup>১</sup>

This lengthy extract is quoted not only to show the preponderance of Persian words and forms but it will also be noticed from the descriptions contained here that Bengal, then divided into Tālūks, was governed by officers like *Fīr, Kotāl, Sarhāl, Dihādār, Jamādār*, etc., that Hindu cities or villages have already taken Moham-

Mohammedan names, that people are getting *lhelāts* as a sign of royal favour, that men like Śīmanta or Gambhīra had been adorned with Mohammedan titles of distinction, and that, on the whole, Mohammedan ideas and customs had penetrated into the very fabric of native society. It is not surprising therefore that in the age of Rājā

Bhārat chandra Kṛsnachandīa, Bhārat-chandra Rāy, himself a man of sound culture possessing considerable knowledge of Sanscrit, could not escape the fascination of a mixed language and the influence of Persian ideas.<sup>1</sup> We find him saying, therefore, while describing a conversation between Emperor Jahāngīr and Rājā Mānasīnha

মানসিংহ পাভসাব হইল যে বাণী  
উচিত সে পাবনী আববী হিন্দুস্থানী ॥  
পড়িয়াছি যেই মত বর্ণিবাবে পাবি  
কিস্ত সে সকল লোক বুঝিবাবে ভাবি ॥  
না ববে প্রসাদগুণ না হবে বসাল  
অতএব কহি ভাষা এবনী মিশাল ॥

It is not unusual therefore that writing in 1778, Halhed in the Preface to his *Grammar* says "At present those persons are thought to speak this compound idiom (Bengali) with the greatest elegance who mix with pure Indian verbs

<sup>1</sup> It is well-known, for instance, that much of the famous description of his heroine's beauty is derived from Persian sources.

the greatest number of Persian and Arabic nouns." It is in the court language however which still favours a preponderance of effete Persian forms that the largest percentage of Persian words are to be found and the following extract of a petition given in an appendix to

Halhed's *Grammar* will show how

Specimen of the  
court-language

the persianisation was carried even  
to a far greater length than was ever

done by the authors of *Itarajaditya Charitra* or *Tota Itihasa*—

প্রিয়। গরিব নেত্রাজ শেলামত। আমার ভদ্রিয়ারি পরগণে  
কাকদোদ তাহার চট গ্রাম দিয়া একিতি হৈরাছে সেট চট গ্রাম  
পক্ষী হৈরাছে চাকালে একবনপুয়ের প্রহরেবট চৌধুরি আজ যার  
অবশ্যতী দখল করিয়া ভোগ করিতেছে। আমি মানচিতারির  
শব্দমায়েসে মাসা পড়িয়েছি উনে ওয়ার মে শব্দকার হৈতে আমি ও  
এক চোপসার শব্দমায়েসে পড়িয়া তোমাদেরকে তদব দিয়া আশানত  
করিয়া হক দেখাইয়া দেন। ইতি সন ১১৮৫ তারিখ ১১ শ্রাবণ।  
দিসবি ভগতদ্বির যার।

It will be noticed however that about this time a reaction was setting in in favour of the use of Bengali and the lengthy prefaces to Forster's *Vocabulary* as well as to Halhed's *Grammar* which detail at some length the arguments in favour of the study of Bengali, bear witness to this reversion of popular feeling. Bengali at this time officially as well as popularly was an unrecognised vernacular and both Halhed and Forster rightly insist upon the absurdity and inconvenience of continuing

the use of Persian in courts of law

Discontinuance of  
Persian in law-court

Colebrooke<sup>1</sup> pays a high eulogy  
to Halhed and Forster for having

brought the scientific study of Bengali within easy reach, but to them also as well as to other later writers, both native and foreign, belongs the credit of making Bengali not only the official language of the Presidency but also the basis of one of the most prolific literary languages of India.

While the *tal* pundits and the court-scribes were attempting to bring Bengali under the lead of Sanscrit and Persian respectively, the language

(3) The common people, their language (সকল লোকের ভাষা) in the country-places, among "low men" and the people generally, was

the unforbidden, if untaught, Bengali, which we find in the old writers and of which we

find a distant echo in the outbursts of purely native inspiration like those of the *Kabirālas*,

*Kabirālas* and *others* *yātrākars*, *Kāthakars*, and *Pāñchālī-kars*. A little Sanscritised on the

one hand and a little Persianised on the other, the

language preserved the equipoise perfectly and drew its nerve and vigour from the soil itself. It was so direct

in its simplicity, so dignified in its colloquial ease, and so artful in its want of art that it never failed to appeal.

Not a single latter-day writer, as the foremost among them himself acknowledges, has been able to speak in

the same tongue. While speaking of this language of the people in its contrast to modern mixed literary

diction, Bankim Chandra lamented<sup>1</sup> "আজিকার দিনে অভিনব ও উন্নতিব পথে সমগ্র সৌন্দর্যবিশিষ্ট বাঙ্গালা সাহিত্য

দেখিয়া অনেক সময় বোধ হয়, হোক সুন্দর ' Īśvar Gupta কিঞ্চিৎ এ বুঝি পবেব আমাদেব নয়। খাঁটি

বাঙ্গালা কথায় বাঙ্গালীব মনেব ভাব ত খুঁজিয়া পাই না। তাই ঈশ্বরগুপ্তেব কবিতা সংগ্রহে প্রবৃত্ত হইয়াছি।"

<sup>1</sup> ঈশ্বর গুপ্তের কবিতা সংগ্রহের মূখবন্ধ। (1895) Preface to the *Kabirā Saṁgraha* of Īśvar Chandra Gupta. Ed. by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and Gopāl Chandra Mukerjee in 2 pts.

Īvar Gupta<sup>1</sup> whose tone and temper allied him with the ħabīwalas was indeed the last of that blessed race over whom the confusion of Babel had not yet fallen

It must not be supposed here that we are advocating purism in the matter of language or lamenting over the prevalence of Sanscrit Persian or other influence "Purism" to quote the words of a learned writer in the *Calcutta Review*<sup>2</sup>

is radically unsound and has its origin in a spirit of narrowness. In the free commingling of nations there must be borrowing and giving. Can anything be more absurd than to think of keeping language pure when blood itself cannot be kept pure? No human language has ever been perfectly pure any more than any human race has been pure. Infusion of foreign elements do in the long run enrich languages just as infusion of foreign blood improves races. But in the beginning of the last century the conflict of foreign elements under which Bengali prose came for a time proved a source of confusion to many a writer of the period. Lexicographers and grammarians like Halhed Forster and Carey are eternally complaining in their bewilderment, of the confusing variety and the exceedingly corrupt state of the vernacular due to its subjection to various foreign influence for the many political revolutions the country had sustained and its long  
(4) To European communication with men of different religions countries and manners  
writers

But here of course we are speaking of Īvar Gupta poetry and not his prose which perhaps exhibits the modern tendencies better than any other prose of the period

Śyāmā Charaṇ Gāḅgull, *Calcutta Review* 1878

See Halhed's and Forster's remarks quoted at pp 80- and 92 *etc* respectively



had impaired the simplicity of the vernacular and rendered it somewhat difficult for a foreigner. Not only did the pundits incorporate stiff

and unfamiliar Sanscrit words and constructions and the Mohammedans various terms relating chiefly to

business, law and government, the European nations too who settled here, never failed to influence the language and naturalise into it words of European origin. Of these, the Portuguese, before the British, have left behind them the largest traces in the country

as well as in the language. The Portuguese extended their trade

to Bengal a little before 1530 and after temporarily settling at Betad (বৈতাল) near Śibpur, and then at Saptagrām (সাতগ্রাম) they finally colonised at "Golin" (near Bandel) at about 1537 or 1538<sup>1</sup>. In a short time, they became a formidable political power, and their wealth, daring roguery, and naval and military activity made them dreaded all over the country. About the end of the 16th century they settled at Barānagar near Calcutta and soon entered the Sunderbuns, gradually spreading over Eastern Bengal, where as pirates, adventurers, and extensive dealers in slave-trade, they soon obtained a dreaded reputation<sup>2</sup>. Their head-quarter in East Bengal was Chittagong, which, being more accessible by the sea, was called the Porto Grande, while

<sup>1</sup> Stewart, *History of Bengal*, quoting (Ed 1847, p 1531) Faria Y Souza. Golin has been supposed to be the same as Ugclyn, a Portuguese form of Hugli.

<sup>2</sup> There is an allusion to their puacy and their use of হারামদ (Armada or War ship) in the *Chandī* of Kabikāṅkan—

ফিরাদিব দেশখান বহে কর্ণধারে

রাত্রিতে বাহিয়া যায় হারামদ ডরে ॥

Hugh their central colony in West Bengal was named Porto Pequeno Portuguese language came naturally with the Portuguese power and for about two centuries and a half even survived its extinction. It was to quote Marshman,<sup>1</sup> the Lingua Franca of all foreign settlements around the Bay of Bengal and was the ordinary medium of conversation between the European and their domestics even down to so late a period as 1828. It is easy to see that such neer-do-well adventurers as Portuguese pirates could hardly ever be expected to exert any properly literary influence and their only point of contact with Bengali was through the medium of language.<sup>2</sup> They supplied its vocabulary with appellation of European arts and invention names of many fruits herbs and trees (আনারস etc) which they had brought over from South America or elsewhere certain terms of gambling (Primerio প্রেমেরা etc) and even common everyday expressions like বেদার! আনালা ফিতা গির্জা জোলাপ আলমারি আলপিন বালতি শামলা প্রেক চাবি বরগা etc. The common form of the oath 'মাইরি' is even supposed to be a corrupt form of the name of the Virgin. It will be seen however that this Portuguese influence on Bengali was on the whole comparatively slight and it never succeeded in changing the current mode of expression nor went beyond introducing certain fresh terms into its vocabulary.<sup>3</sup>

*History of Serampore Mission* vol. i, pp. 21-22

For an account of Portuguese influence and Portuguese element in Bengal, see *Siksha Pratikā*, vol. xviii p. 45 et seq. where a good list of Portuguese words naturalised in Bengali will also be found. See also Hobson-Jobson ed. Yule and Burnell. J. A. Campos in his recent *History of the Portuguese in Bengal* (1919) has also given a list of Portuguese words in Bengali.

The first Bengali Grammar and Dictionary was in Portuguese. See p. 75 ante.

But the British influence on Bengali, owing to its permanent and all-embracing character, was more deep and far-reaching

The language of the  
European writers  
(মাহেশ্বরী বা খ্য়ৈনৌ  
বাক্সালি)

In matters of language, however, the British writers at the outset, we have seen, found themselves in an embarrased position

They did not know in the midst of perplexing diversity what models to choose or what form of the language to adopt They however took primarily as their guide the compositions of their own munsis or pundits, which leaned towards pedantry and sanscritisation, but fortunately their strong commonsense, their literary instinct, and an innate tendency to realism,<sup>1</sup> which is a distinctive feature of all English writers, saved them from the contagion of affectation and made them adopt a more simple and natural style Their language is

Its sources

a curious admixture of the sanscritised style of the pundits (সাধুভাষা) and the

colloquial language of the people (চলিতভাষা) with some peculiarities of its own and a more or less decided leaning towards the latter The missionaries and the schoolmasters, to whose rank and file belong most of the early European writers in Bengali, lived in the closest touch with the people, and their chief end in writing was not to show off their erudition but to make themselves intelligible, to be popular, clear and useful There are, it is true, errors and

Its errors in vocabulary, syntax and idiom, but general excellence in its healthy direction towards simplicity and naturalness

excesses in their writing as vexations as the stiffness of the Pundits, and the missionary Bengali has always been the sport of criticism But, in spite of these and other aberrations, the general

excellence of their style in one direction at least can

<sup>1</sup> See the remarks on Carey's *Dialogues* at p. 146

never be disputed namely that it implicitly precision and directness presents a striking contrast to the overpopulated affectation of the Sanscrit jurist or the mixed jargon of the Persianised munshi. Calcutta and its coadjutors brought to their task, that of translation and tract writing, a combination of education and object. They were men all trained in the severe science of theological study and they always strove to be exact and intelligible to the people.

Their training compelled them to be precise and their object compelled them to be forcible. No better exercising

The training and object of these European writers

ground for an infant prose in all but some ways could have been provided than the combined one of translation and polemic. The utilitarian end of these European writers, their realistic tendency, their positive influence and attainment directed the whole movement towards simplicity and naturalness, and it is well worthy of note that even some of the learned pundits of the Fort William College through their example did not despise to adopt occasionally the popular *patwa* of the country.<sup>1</sup>

Thus it will be seen that at the beginning of the 19th century there were, roughly speaking, four different ways or modes of expression, struggling to gain ground and competing for mastery, namely

The subsequent history of these four divergent styles

মহিমী ভাষা, আদালতী ভাষা, চলিত ভাষা and মাজেরী মাজলি। Of these the আদালতী ভাষা (court language) in course of time, with the general disuse and discontinuance of Persian in law-courts, became almost extinct, and by 1870 we find but little trace of it, except in a few legal technical

See for example the story of বিবিসন in Maitland's *Prabodhchandrodd* বিবিসন গল্প এবং গল্প, part of which is quoted *ante* at pp. 221-222.

publications The spoken idiom (চলিত ভাষা) favoured chiefly by the old school of writers like the Kabiwalas and used in country-places, never came into any direct prominence

which comes to a head in a general opposition between the plain and the ornate styles

The only two forms of style which stood in sharp antithesis to each other in the prose publications of the time and continued to play an important part in the literary history down to the fifties, were the learned style (পণ্ডিতী ভাষা), on the one hand, and the missionary style (সাহেবী বাঙ্গালা), on the other. The exclusive class of learned pundits still kept on in the traditional stiffness of their elaborate diction, while a host of new writers, who came into the field with the spread of English education<sup>1</sup> generally adopted the language of the missionaries in a purer and more modified form. The perpetually recurring struggle between the ornate and the plain styles<sup>2</sup> which plays an important part in the history of prose style in almost every literature, was for the first time definitely posed and worked out in Bengali prose in this period the ornate style being favoured by the pundits and the plain style chiefly adopted by the missionary writers.

This opposition becomes more well defined in the antithesis of the *Ālālī* and the Sanscrit College styles of the fifties

The style of the pundits found a direct descendant in the *Sanscrit College style* of the fifties, while the *Ālālī style*, which betokened a contemporary reactionary movement, found its progenitor, through various intermediaries, primarily in the healthy movement towards simplicity and naturalness, first inaugurated by the Europeans,

<sup>1</sup> Of whom the most prominent name is that of Rev Kṛṣṇamohan Bandyopādhyāy

<sup>2</sup> See pp 147, 219-20.

although secondarily it incorporated various elements from the language of the common people (চলিত ভাষা) and even from the Persianised court-language (আদর্শ ভাষা). Thus we see that this opposition between the plain and the ornate styles persistently dominated the history of Bengali prose for almost half a century and reached to a crisis in the two antithetical movements of the fifties—indicated by the *Āvali style* and the *Sanskrit College Synthesis* in Bankim *style*—of which the genius of chandra, a writer like Bankimchandra alone could find a proper synthesis.

It will be seen therefore that from the standpoint of literary history, the importance of this period in prose is hardly less than that of any other. But its productions marked that they are by earliness and immaturity have far less intrinsic merit.

No historian of literature can claim anything like literary competency for much of this early prose if he judges it by any strict literary standard. Originality is not a distinctive merit of this literature at all. Grammars

Want of originality school books religious tracts, and other similar documents most of them again mere translated pieces cannot in their very nature justly claim to be called literature. In their translations again these writers are faithful enough there is hardly any native aspiration to be free and original. Here and there, no doubt, they improved upon the capital that came into their hands but they seldom created or broke loose from their original. The style again is of the rudest character, abrupt disconnected obscure and full of anacolutha not only in the works of the missionaries whose command over the inherent resources of the language must have necessarily been limited and whose reputations

for erratic style is traditional, but also in the more correct and laboured treatises of the pundits, who confounded the genius of Bengali with that of Sanscrit. The divergent varieties of expression, again, not only give a comical aspect to the prose of the period but also make it difficult to fix upon general style. Style, however, in the strict and rare sense, is hardly to be

No style in the proper sense found in any of these writings. The age of *literary* Bengali had not yet fully dawned, although some of these writings, it must be admitted, are racy from age and agreeable from their very want of precision.

When, however, we take an estimate of the sum-total of its achievements, this period of prose never fails to impress

us with its importance. Systematic and universal prose-writing is the first thing that it accomplished, and suggestion of new forms, methods, and materials is the second. There was indeed some amount of religious <sup>1</sup> and philosophical prose-writing before this but there was, as we have pointed out, no prose-of-all-work, suited to the every-day requirements of the people as well as for their literary purposes. Clear, useful and popular prose-writing is a creation of this period, although we have yet to wait for another quarter of a century for the dawn of literary Bengali prose. The use of this prose, again, to address the common people who had been only accessible by verse, is another remarkable achievement of this period. It may be well pointed out that though the decay of ancient learning was lamentable in itself, it was yet fortunate in a way for Bengali, for it not only threw men back upon their vernacular but it also stimulated translation and so gave practice in the

<sup>1</sup> Esp. on the Sahajiyā form of Baiṣṇabism. See Appendix I.

vernacular, instead of tempting men as they had been tempted simply to abstract and compile in the learned classic tongue and even when they wrote original work, to write it in that obsolete language ! That one important limitation namely, that of translation which had been imposed upon it still remained was no drawback for the time. Indeed, translation is not so entirely an un-original thing as it seems or boasts to be, and in certain respects it is the best exercising ground for an infant prose literature which had not yet passed even through the lower stages of pupilship. We shall see, indeed, that no really good prose appeared until a long period of apprenticeship in translation had elapsed. Much more importation of vocabulary much more experiment in term forging much more copying of the more accomplished prose-forms of the European languages and classic Sanscrit were necessary before the resources of style could be really at the command of the prose writer in miscellaneous subjects.

The field of literary adventures again was enlarged to an extent never known before. It is true that this was essentially a period more distinguished for its

Literature of knowledge rather than literature of power

contributions to what a class of critics would call the 'literature of knowledge' rather than to the 'literature of power'; yet there

is not a single department of useful knowledge which these European writers did not touch. History and Biography, Ethics and Moral Tales,

Variety of subject matter

Grammar and Dictionary, Mathematics and Natural Philosophy,

But later on in the next decade it brought another temptation, which we have not wholly overcome and which, under the circumstances would be for some time to come a necessity in itself of writing in English.



Chemistry and Medicine everywhere we trace the indefatigable activity of the European writers. It is true that most of these works were meant merely to be text-books but they are equally significant of the zeal of their authors as writers and teachers and of the encouragement which was afforded to the cause of learning. The multiplication of

Grammar and Dictionary, no doubt, points to a zealous movement towards the scientific study of the language,

but it must be admitted that in the lexicons compiled by European writers, undue preponderance is given to Sanscrit words and the proportion of purely native Bengali words is comparatively small while the Grammars, on the other-hand, are written mostly on the pattern of English Grammars and consequently fail to set in relief the peculiar features of the oriental vernacular. Little need be said of

the works on History and Biography, Ethics and Moral Tales, for almost all these writings consist of mere translation but a peculiar interest

attaches, as we have seen, to the Bengali scientific writings of this period for their useful glossaries of technical and difficult terms as well as for their

Scientific writings manner and method of rendering scientific ideas into Bengali. But, besides these contributions to the department of useful knowledge, there came about, under the European influence, a vogue for realism and social satire. The popular opinion

Realism and social satire, has always leant to the supposition that in this sphere *Ālāl* and *Hutam* are the pioneer works, but even long before

these works were published, from the time of Carey's *Dialogues* downwards, numerous works (such as Bhabānī-charaṇ's *Kalkātā Kamalālaya* or Pramathanāth Śarmā's

*Naba Dabn Bilasa*) were published which served as models for *Alul* and *Huntan* and which had indeed reached a high degree of success and popularity. Another important field into which these Europeans directed the energy of

Bengali writers is that of journalism

Journalism  
Thanks to the courage and zeal of its promoters the difficult social and political conditions under which it was started never retarded its growth and its long and interesting history bears witness to the enormous popularity and usefulness of this organ of popular opinion

## CHAPTER IX

### INTERREGNUM IN POETRY FROM 1760.

The closing years of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th form a period of transition from old Bengali to modern Bengali literature, and in this period, as in every period of transition, while access was obtained to new ideas and new methods, the old traditions in literature still lived on. In the light of the Europeanised literature of to-day, prominence must be and has been given to European activity in Bengali Literature of this period, yet from the death of Bhārat-chandra in 1760 to the death of Īśvai Gupta in 1858, flourished a class of Bengali writers, chiefly poets, who were un-influenced by English ideas and who maintained, even with declining powers, the literary traditions of the past.

A body of indigenous literature

Literary history, as a rule, is studded with such 'survivals' or 'relics,' if we may use these terms, but it is hardly correct to regard these outbursts of purely native inspiration as mere empty echoes of the past or flickering reactionary movements which the historian of literature may safely ignore. The tendencies of European or Europeanised writers may, in a sense, be described as exotic, but these inheritors of the literary traditions and instincts

representing, in contrast to the writings of the Europeans, a distinct phase of literary development

of the ancient race, on the other hand, were essentially national in sentiment and expression, and as such, represent, apart from all question of intrinsic excellence, a phase of literary development which we cannot very well pass over.

The literature of the first half of the 19th century is dominated in the main by two distinct tendencies the one is fostered by European writers or by men tutored in European ideas and marked generally by the spirit of an intellectual aristocracy while the other derives its strength from the essence of native genius untouched by foreign ideas and expresses itself chiefly in various forms of popular literature. The one dressed in the new apparel of prose goes forth to capture the gifts of the new knowledge but the other, conveyed in the traditionary vehicle of verse, remains content with the spiritual inheritance of the past diminished though it is with the lapse of time. The antagonism between these two tendencies though it may not be very marked in later periods,

Antagonism between two opposing tendencies in the 19th century literature.

lasts throughout the literary history of the 19th century and in the literature of to-day although the triumph of the new tendency is

said to be fully proclaimed yet it remains to be considered how far this triumph has been or may be achieved without making legitimate concessions to the demands of the opposing tendency Till the death of Jévar Gupta, in whom we find indeed the last, if not the least, valiant champion of the old race the antagonism is definitely posed and consistently worked out. With the death of Jévar Gupta we are at the end of the most effective note in the ancient trend of thought and feeling and followers of the old tendency thereafter in struggling to maintain their own against the stronger drift of new ideas were obviously fighting for a lost cause.

Decay of the old style, but its remarkable influence in later literature.

Ever since that time the cause may indeed be regarded as lost and any attempt to-day to revive the old

style would be possibly as futile and ridiculous as the

attempt of Don Quixote to revive the expiring days of chivalry. But, even though the cause was lost, its lessons were not lost, the principles for which it had fought survived and found gradual acceptance. However imperceptible the process had been, it succeeded in tempering the unlicensed Europeanisation of later literature. It afforded a healthy antidote against the unchecked alienation of literature from national sensibilities, it represented a strong counter-current of purely native energy, which, if it never forced itself directly to the surface, never at the same time failed to make its subtle and wholesome influence felt. It is a mistake to suppose that the old tendency absolutely died out with the death of Īśvar Gupta. It never died out but it left its enduring vitality in the current of national thought and feeling, unmistakable influence of which may be traced even in the literature of to-day. The spirit of an age or race, yielding to that of its successor, continues to abide in it as an essential ingredient, assumed, transformed and carried forward.

In an historical survey of the 19th century literature, therefore, we cannot mistake the significance of this tendency of literature, which derived its inspiration primarily from conditions of national culture which were not accessible to European or Europeanised writers of the first half of that century. We must indeed give the more prominent place to European writers and those who trod in their footsteps, because it is chiefly through their efforts, aided no doubt by the hand of the foreign government, that the dominance of western ideas ultimately strengthened itself and gave the final bent to the form and spirit of modern literature, yet the account of the period would surely be incomplete if we do not take into consideration this stream of purely indigenous activity flowing in the opposite direction and the extent of

its influence in moulding the literary characteristics of the age

The historical importance therefore of this inferior but not insignificant band of writers belonging to the old school lies mainly as we have seen in the fact that whatever may be the intrinsic value of their writings they exemplify and hand down in their own way the failing inspiration of earlier days and thus maintain the continuity of literary history during the period of interregnum between the death of Bhārat Chandra and the emergence of the new school. Although some of them lived far into the first half of the 19th century they do not reflect the growing literary tendencies of the new era but they keep up the old manner of thought, the old fashion of imagination and the old form of expression and thus secure the inheritance of ancient literature for the advantage of the new generation. Standing as they do, on the the gateway of modern literature they give little or no presentiment of things to come they do not announce the future but they represent the past and stoutly if unconsciously make their stand for a fast disappearing form of art and expression which drew its inspiration from the past life of the nation itself and which was not without its significance to the new life the nation was entering upon.

There was a time however when the value of these writings was totally forgotten or ignored. They appeared contemptible in the eyes of the so-called Young Bengal of the last century who had been tutored rigidly in western ideas and western literature to the exclusion of everything national. Even to-day

The historical importance of these indigenous writers.

Value of this literature not to be ignored or forgotten.

it is doubtful if we have entirely outgrown this stage of defective mental susceptibility, although critics are not wanting who would go to the other extreme of fanatical admiration. Íśvai Gupta, in the early fifties, spoke in exuberantly enthusiastic language of the untutored songs of the old Kabis, yet if we are to take Bankim-chandra as the representative of the next generation, we find his age regarding these compositions with frank disapproval, if not always with superior contempt. In recent years, when we are not altogether obtuse and irresponsible, we have taught ourselves to speak in sober tone and measured language. In literary history, there are no doubt extreme vicissitudes of taste whereby the idols of the past generation crumble suddenly to dust, while new favourites are raised to the old pedestal of glory, yet in spite of such successive waves of aesthetical preference, we must guard against falling into the error of orthodox dogmatism, on the one hand, and the ignorant following of fashion, on the other. Leaving aside personal predilections and the narrowness of sects and coteries we find critics even to-day who would see nothing in these forms of literature which is well worth a moment's thought. Much of this literature, as in the case of some of the songs of the Kabiwalas, is no doubt transient and ephemeral and there is certainly much in it which is really contemptible, yet the frivolity of an imitative culture or the wild pursuit of ever-shifting literary fashion ought not to blind us to the historical and literary value, whatever it might be, of the art and literature of a generation which has passed away. It is idle to regard any particular form of art or mode of utterance as final or absolutely authoritative. Critical taste should be more open-minded and unprejudiced and the study of literature should be placed upon sounder historical and scientific methods.

We propose in the following pages to take these writers in the old style in the groups mentioned below

It would not be necessary for us to deal with this class of writings in minute detail it would be enough for our purpose if we indicate broadly the phase of literary development which they represent and give a more or less general survey of their work and achievement. It may be noted here at the outset that in the case of many of these groups materials for study are extremely scanty and scattered and most of the writings which belong to this section have not been yet critically studied or edited. In the case of *Pāñcālī* and *Yātrā* and devotional songs, for instance no attempt has yet been made to collect either data and materials for tracing their systematic history or even to make a satisfactory collection of these floating and fast vanishing forms of literature. Under this condition of imperfect knowledge of the subject no apology is necessary for imperfect treatment and what is offered here must be taken as nothing more than a merely tentative and preliminary attempt

- Grouping of this literature.
- (1) Kāvīvalas
  - (2) Nidhu Bābu and writers of *Tappā*
  - (3) Followers of Rām prasād and writers of devotional songs
  - (4) Followers of Bhārat-chandra
  - (5) Isolated followers of ancient authors Jay nārāyan Ghoṣṭī Raghunandan Goavāmī and others
  - (6) Authors of *Pāñcālī* and *Yātrā*
  - (7) Miscellaneous songsters.



## CHAPTER X

### KABIWALAS

The existence of Kabi-songs may be traced to the beginning of the 18th century or even beyond it to the 17th, but the most flourishing period of the Kabiwalas was between 1760 and 1810. Rāsu and Nrsimha were born somewhere between 1731 and 1738, Haru Thākuri in 1738, Nitāi Banāgī in 1747, so that between 1760 and 1780, they had all reached the height of their reputation as songsters and made this form of literary amusement popular throughout the country. During the continuance of the dual government therefore between 1765 and 1775, and in the period of literary interregnum which followed upon the death of Bhārat-chandra, they were the most considerable pretenders in the literary field, and if the mantle of the old authors did not exactly suit their narrow shoulders, they attempted in the main to echo the sentiment and ideas of old-world poetry. Most of these greater Kabiwalas lived into the period of British rule. Rāsu and Nrsimha died between 1805 and 1807, but Haru Thākuri lived up to 1812 and Nitāi even beyond that to 1821. Rām Basu, though in a sense considerably junior to these earlier poets, having been born in 1786, died early in 1828. After these greater Kabiwalas, came then followers, disciples and imitators who maintained the tradition of Kabi-poetry up to the fifties or beyond it. The Kabi-poetry therefore covers roughly the long stretch of a century from 1760 to 1860, although after 1830 all the greater Kabiwalas one by one had passed away and Kabi-poetry had rapidly

Chronology and  
classification of Kabi  
literature

declined in the hands of their less gifted followers. We shall have therefore to distinguish three different periods of Kabi literature—(1) Before 1760 (2) Between 1760 and 1830 (3) After 1830

The Kabi poetry however has been subjected to an amount of harsh and even contemptuous criticism which it hardly ever deserved. The Reforming Young Bengal of the forties considered all forms of popular amusements—*Kabi lātrā*, or *Pāñickālī*—to be contemptible. We shall

see that there had gradually come into Kabi-songs elements which were really contemptible, but what strikes one in the study of these popular

Unfavourable reception of these songs in later times.

forms of literature is that throughout the 19th century, with the exception of Išvar Gupta and a few isolated appreciators of things ancient, the so-called educated men of that century hardly ever cared to make a sympathetic study much less to realise their literary or historical importance. Even to-day they do not seem to have received their due amount of attention or appreciation although none but the most opinionative or the most obtuse would seriously consider them to be wholly worthless or wholly contemptible. In spite of the apparent uncertainty of critical determinations the historical importance of these songs apart from all question of artistic valuation cannot surely be denied. The old Kabi literature does not require an apologist to-day but it stands upon its own inherent claims to be treated in an historical survey of Bengali literature of this century.

But the materials and means for a critical study of this literature are extremely

Materials and means of study scanty

scanty and at the same time it is doubtful whether even much of it can bear very well a thorough critical examination. We

at present find only scattered abroad a few fragments which may convey a knowledge of this literature but which are insufficient to familiarise us with it so as to enable us either to appreciate its beauty, construct its history or determine its value. Informations about the lives of these Kabi-walas or with regard to the general history of Kabi-poetry are extremely scanty, what remains consists of a few traditional stories, often useless and ill-authenticated.

When we consider the peculiar conditions under which most of these songs were composed and the mode in which they were transmitted we can, to

Why the literature was not preserved,

some extent, understand why a very small and fragmentary part of this

literature has come down to us. These Kabis were not properly speaking, leisured and accomplished men of letters, cultivating literature for its own sake, and their productions were not deliberate

Peculiar method of composition and mode of transmission

literary compositions meant for a critical audience. Their very name

*Dāṁḍā Kabī* (দাঁড়া কবি)<sup>1</sup> indicates

perhaps the peculiar way in which they extemporised their songs, standing like a rhapsodist before a motley assembly, although it is difficult to say from what time exactly this appellation was first applied to them. The evil days of the latter half of the 18th century, we have seen, necessitated the growth of a class of "poets" whose calling had

<sup>1</sup> It seems that this epithet is very old but according to one version the epithet *Dāṁḍā Kabī* was applied to distinguish *Kabī* from *Hāp ākḥḍāi*, which was a hybrid species, formed out of *Kabī* and *ākḥḍāi*, and which was therefore a kind of *basā kabī* (Preface to *Manomohan Gītābalī*, written by Manomohan Basu himself) But see *Janma bhūmī*, vii, p 58

now become an irregular profession and a regular means of livelihood and of a body of literature which was marked by carelessness rather than by scrupulousness and which belonged to that class of writings conveniently termed ephemeral journalism. The authors had no higher ambition than that of immediately pleasing their patrons and gaining their cheap praise and pay. They never cared to reach that mark of excellence which would make posterity pause before it would willingly let their productions perish. These songs again had generally circulated in the mouths of the people in course of time while some were forgotten others got curiously mixed up or passed through strange transformations until as in their present extant form, they can hardly be called the genuine original works of their creator or with confidence be referred to this or that individual author. No critical appreciation or discrimination was expected and none was made. The literature was forgotten no sooner than a generation had passed away. Even in 1854 Īśvar Gupta lamented that most of these songs had already vanished in his time or had been fast vanishing and his self imposed task of collecting these old songs had been rendered difficult by the fact that he had to depend entirely upon the uncertain and fleeting memory of old men who had been day by day dropping away. Except Nidhu Bābu among the earlier group—and Nidhu Bābu though a patron of *āśāśāś* can hardly be classed as a Kabiwala—none of these poets or their followers ever cared to reduce their songs to writing. Printing was hardly known in those days and if known was too expensive and difficult of access to these needy songsters yet men like Haru Thākur had rich patrons like Rājā Naba Kṛṣṇa to whom it had never occurred that these floating songs were worth

preserving The change of taste and fashion in the next generation and the contempt with which all earlier writing had come to be regarded could hardly favour the idea of preserving or collecting this literature in any form. It is not surprising therefore that no attempt

at a collection and preservation of  
 Our chief source of information these songs had been made till in

1851, Īśvarī Gupta, whose poetic sympathies allied him with Kabi-walas and who himself was no mean composer of Kabi-song, first collected and published some of these half forgotten songs in the pages of his *Sambād-prabhākar*. It is chiefly through his untiring zeal and devoted labours, ably seconded by the efforts of a few other later collectors, that we possess what remains of this Kabi-literature, for although several inferior anthologies have been made since then, most of these, with or without acknowledgment, draw liberally from the rich fund which he had supplied half a century ago and little substantial addition has been made to our knowledge ever since.

It is very difficult, in the absence of materials, to trace the origin of this peculiar form of literature, hardly at all literary, which expressed itself in songs but which was chiefly meant for popular amusement. Most of the songs which have come down to us belong to a date posterior to the middle of the 18th century, in tracing, therefore, the form and spirit of this verse, as it existed earlier than this date, we must be guided chiefly by conjecture derived from the study of the later fragments which have been preserved as well as by an examination of the general drift of the literature itself. It must be noted, however, that song-literature is not a novel thing in Bengali for it had formed

Origin and growth  
 of Kabi-poetry

a part of the social and religious life of the people and religious festivities enlivened by singing were celebrated with a gaiety which had its mundane side. Even with the decline of *Baisnabism* which had brought in its wake a glorious time of sweet singing and with the revival of *Śākta* and other forms of literature in the 18th century, the tradition of song making had never been extinct. The *Baisnabs* by their peripatetic singing had spread songs broadcast leavening as they did the popular mind and although times and circumstances had changed the perennial love of song which marks Bengali literature throughout its history, always survived. The political troubles of the 18th century and the social changes consequent thereupon naturally precluded any serene exercise of serious literature except perhaps in remote villages or in the comparatively secure and luxurious courts of noble patrons but the popular craving was satisfied on the one hand by *yātrās* *pāñchālīs* and other cognate forms of popular literature in which also there was always an exclusive preponderance of the song-element, and by the devotional songs like those of *Rām prasad* and his followers, on the other. It was about this time that the *Kabiwalas* had come into prominence. The time was not for thought it wanted song and amusement the *Kabiwalas* who could give them had soon become popular.

But the days of royal or other forms of patronage had been fast vanishing. The poets

The audience for whom it was composed

fallen on evil days had to depend more and more upon the favour of the capricious and half educated

public who now became their chief patrons. The ruin of old *zamindars* and princely houses begun in the latter days of the Mohammedan rule and completed

in the earlier days of British supremacy, had brought into existence, as we have seen, a class of up-start landlords and speculators who stepped into their places but who could not be expected to possess the same inherited tradition of culture and refinement as marked the ancient aristocracy of the land. The commercial bannans, seths, and merchants, on the other hand, in the new flourishing cities, now growing into importance, constituted themselves a class of patrons who demanded literature, not of a fine stuff but that which could afford them momentary excitement of pleasure in the intervals of engrossing business. The new public had neither the leisure, the capacity nor the willingness to study or appreciate any reproduction of the finer shades and graces of earlier poetry. This was the audience<sup>1</sup> for whom, in the main, the Kabiwalas sang their songs, and it is no wonder that the tone and temper of the literature they produced was debased through this unholy contact. This debasement was complete in the next generation when with the spread of western education and consequent revolution in taste, these songs had been banished totally from 'respectable' society and descended to the lower classes who demanded a literature suited to their uneducated

reacted upon it and  
contributed to its de-  
basement

<sup>1</sup> The suggestion (Dinosh Chandra Sen, *History*, p. 697) that the low caste of the songsters show that the institution was essentially for the amusement of the illiterate rustics who formed its chief audience, is hardly borne out by facts. This form of entertainment obtained specially in urban centres like Chandannagar, Chinsurah and Calcutta and most of the Kabiwalas were not rural rustics but men bred up in the cities. Rām Basu, Haru Thākur, Nitāi Banārgī and indeed the whole host of them lived in Calcutta or in the neighbouring cities. Kabi poetry itself, if not completely urban, is however devoid of all stamps of rusticity.

taste This was the beginning of *lkenāḍ* (খেউড়) and *Itāp-āḥkḍas* (হাপ আখড়াই) in Kabi literature In the earlier days Kabi-songs had been composed and sung in great ceremonies and festivals and the subjects of these songs generally referred to religious themes in the latter days even in the days of Nīṭāi Bairāgi, Išvar Gupta tells us 'বিশিষ্ট জনেরা শুভাগানে এবং ইতর জনেরা খেউড় গানে তুটে হইত'; and an illustrative anecdote is related with reference to Nīṭāi, which runs thus 'এমত জনগণ যে বনভাগে কোন এক রজনীতে কোন স্থানে ইনি সর্বসংবাদ ও বিরহ গাহিয়া আপন অত্যন্ত অখাটু কমিরাছেন তাবৎ ক্ষেত্রেই মুগ্ধ হইয়া অনিতে-ছেন ও পুনঃ পুনঃ বিরহ গাহিতেই অল্পবোধ করিতেছেন, তাহার ভাবার্থ গ্রহণে অকম হইয়া ছোটোলোকেরা আপন পীড়াইয়া চিৎকার পূর্বক কহিল 'হ্যাদ্ বেগ লেভাই, ফ্যার যদি কালকুকিলির গান বসি তো, দো বেলায় খাড় গা নিতাই তজ্জ্ববে তৎকণাং মোটাভবনের খেউড় ধরিয়া তাহারদিগের অস্তির চিত্তকে হুহির করিলেন।

Not only in taste but also in theme style and diction Kabi-songs degenerated The later group of poems from this point of view affords an interesting contrast to the works of the earlier period. We shall have occasion to speak of this matter in detail but it may be noted here at the outset that a wide divergence in method manner and inspiration exists between the earlier and the later groups of Kabi poetry The earlier Kabi songs were not as generally supposed, wholly unpremeditated and wanting in all sense of artistic arrangement or unity of structure, on the contrary they were all composed as we shall see with due deference as

Degeneration of later Kabi poetry in theme style and diction.



in the case of the sonnet, to definite rules of line-arrangement, general structure and rhyme-ending. In later times, with the introduction of lively *hāp-ākhṛā* and *khend*, the more studied structure of earlier songs were replaced by a mode of utterance, off-hand but effective in its unexpectedness and vigorous vulgarity, defiant of all laws and lost to every sense of artistic composition. We hear of the existence of disputants or two opposing 'parties' who took up different aspects of a particular theme and replied to each other in songs, even from the very earliest time when this form of amusement had sprung into existence, and it was probably these passados in the bout of poetical dialectics which had lent in the popular mind a piquancy and zest to these songs and had thus made them preferable perhaps to *yātrās* and *pāñchālīs* which did not include such 'wit-combats' in their scope. But in the earlier period, a consultation used to be held between the parties and the themes and 'replies' were made ready before they were sung. It was Rām Basu, a later Kabīwala, who first introduced the innovation of extempore and free verbal fight between the parties.<sup>1</sup> From his time, these 'flytings' of the Kabīwalas had become, in the proper sense, unpremeditated, and as such, they had come to possess all the qualities and defects of unpremeditated compositions. The unexpected turns of phrases, the clash of witticism, the pungent raciness of colloquial vulgarity were no doubt pleasing to the mob but what is good rhetoric for the groundlings is bad for literature. We can never expect any literary finish or artistic grace in compositions which the necessity of quick and witty reply had brought into existence and

<sup>1</sup> *Prāchīn Kabī samgraha*, ed. Gopāl Chandra Mukhopādhyāy, B S 1284, Introduction, p. 11

which were meant to be more racy and effective than anything else. Coarseness, scurrility and colloquialism unredeemed by any sense of artistic expression began to increase in volume and ultimately Kabir songs subsided into vulgar and abusive verbiage.

It is not surprising, therefore to find that to many a modern reader Kabir literature connotes little more than *low* and bad taste but it must not be forgotten that in its inception it drew its inspiration from a purer

Better quality of  
earlier Kabir poetry

source. The sincere religiousness of the earlier Kabir songs is unmistakable and in spite of later importation and popularity of subjects like *Biraha* or *Sakhi-sakhbād* religion still conti-

Its religious themes

nued to supply the essential ingredient. Although there are many things which at once mark them off from the Bai nab poets the earlier Kabirvālas were in more than one sense nearly allied to their great predecessors. When Baisnabism and its romantic literature had subsided lower and lower into a kind of decrepitude in the 18th century and a militant Śākta literature of a more or less classical type had grown up the Kabirvālas in however grotesque fashion tried to keep up the older tradition and ~~and~~ generally of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The classical form of which had taken shape in the 18th century and ~~and~~ in the writings of Bhārat Chandra was the result of the cause of the rapid decline of Baisnabism.

Sakhi-sakhbād was not secular so ~~it was not~~ such things as *Prabhāṭi* or *Ilhoraj* the morning or Rādhā's morning (in which figure Yodhā the *mādhā* (where Kāṭi and *sakhi* *Prabhāṭi* etc

literature in that period, and the 18th century literature is marked throughout by an entire absence of the literary influence of the lyric and romantic songs of Baisnab poets. The literary practice of the 18th century is a natural reaction and going back to conventional standards of verse-making, with a more or less decided leaning towards the ornate and the erudite. Rhetoric rather than truth, fancy rather than imagination, intellect rather than feeling thus becomes the more mundane means of poetry, in which we miss the passionate idealism or the lyric mysticism of the Baisnabs. The Kabiwalas, no doubt, were carried away more or less by this general literary drift of the period, but it was the Kabiwalas alone who had kept up the tradition of Baisnab poetry in this age of a militant literary tendency. That Kabi-literature, in some way or other, is connected

Alliance with the  
Baisnab poets,

with Baisnab literature and that the Kabiwalas, were, if not the lineal descendant, at least distantly related to the great Baisnab poets, is shown to some extent by the fact that the best part of earlier Kabi-songs relates to the eternal Baisnab theme—the love of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with all its attendant intricacies of *mān*, *māthur*, *brāha*, *gostha*, and other things. The Kabiwalas, it is true, have not got much of the accumulated virtue of Baisnab verse and phrase as well as its deep note of passion and fullness of romantic colour, yet it is remarkable that they still make use of the imagery and the hackneyed generalities of Baisnab writings, and generally echo the sentiments and ideas which had become established in literary usage since the time of the Baisnab poets. It is not always safe to dogmatise, in the absence of evidence, on influences or on the question of literary filiation, but these facts, among others, would tend to indicate the existence of an

unmistakable relationship between the Baisnab writers and the Kabiwalas. It is true that the Kabiwalas never possessed the genius and devotional fervour of the old Baisnab poets: that none of the Kabi-songs reaches that standard of literary excellence which has made Baisnab poetry so resplendent and that the Kabiwalas in course of time admitted more mundane subjects and themes and allowed themselves infinite looseness of speech and style: yet when we come across lines like the following sung by Nitā Bairāgi

শ্যামের বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ।

বঁদুর বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ॥

নহে কেন অঙ্গ অঙ্গণে হইলো,

সুখা বসিবিলাে শ্রবণে ॥

we are at once reminded of many a line from the Baisnab poets, although it is quite probable that it is not a question of direct imitation or assimilation and that none of the Kabiwalas had any straight access to any of these older poets. The Kabiwalas were not a lettered class of studious poets: they probably never had any opportunity of directly utilising the ancient wealth of the land: yet whatever might have been the source through which the tendency had filtered down, they echo primarily in their songs the sentiment and taste of a bye-gone age, and through this inherited tendency and probably through indirect, if not direct, literary filiation, they trace their ultimate ancestry to the ancient Baisnab poets.<sup>1</sup>

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The theory put forward by Dineschandra Sen (*History* p. 697) that Kabi-songs originally constituted parts of old *yātrās*, the simple operative episodes of which were separately worked up into this special species, is hardly convincing; for in the first place, there are no data to support this suggestion; secondly the two kinds had essentially different characteristics; and thirdly the one is not due to the break up of

It is not our purpose here to enter into details but any student of ancient Bengali literature is well aware that Baisnab poetry cannot be very strictly described as simple and unsophisticated, for although it can to-day be enjoyed as pure poetry or as the expression of fervent religious longings in the language of human passion, it can never

The spirit of Baisnab poetry and its psychological and metaphysical formalism

be regarded as the spontaneous product of an uncritical and ingenuous faith. This religious-amatory poetry presupposed a psychology and a metaphysic which had been reduced to an elaborate system and which possessed a peculiar phraseology and a set of conceits of its own. The romantic commonplaces of Baisnab poetry, familiar to any reader not only through its poetry but also through elaborate rhetorical treatises like *Ujvala-Nīlamanī* or elaborate semi-metaphysical works like *Sat-sandarbhā* or *Hari-bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, are in a sense factitious, professional and sectarian, if not doctrinaire or didactic. Many of the famous Baisnab poets, no doubt, got out of their conventional material the kind of effect which appeals to us most strongly and there is the sheer force of poetic inspiration in many of them which lifts their poetry into the highest level of artistic utterance, yet all the floods of their lyric and romantic idealism cannot altogether cover their psychological formalism, their rhetoric of ornament and conceits, their pedantry of metaphysical sentimentalism. The endless diversity of amorous condition grouped conveniently under *mān*, *māthun*,

the other as both existed simultaneously throughout the course of their literary history. The other theory (*Janma bhūmi*, vii, p. 58) that Kabi was originally a part of *Pāñchālī* is more or less open to similar objections. The exact significance of the term *Pāñchālī* itself is uncertain, what character it possessed in earlier times is not definitely known.

*biraka pārbarāg milan* and the like is treated no doubt with emotional directness but they subside into agreeable formulas and dogmatic shibboleths. Leaving aside individual independence of trait so marked in poets like Bidyāpati Chandidās or Jñānādās, when we come to the legion of lesser lights we find that, although these minor poets share more or less in the general poetic spirit pervading the age there is yet a monotonous sameness of characteristics inevitably suggesting a sense of artificiality. In spite of its romantic charm and lyric affluence the themes and subjects of this poetry lacked variety and exuberance of inventive thought. We meet over and over again with the same tricks of expression the same strings of nouns and adjectives the same set of situations, the same group of conceits and the same system of emotional analysis. In the greater poets the sentiment is refined and the expression sufficiently varied. In the lesser poets, they degenerate into rigid artistic conventionalities. When the Kabiwalas came to inherit the spiritual estate of their poetical ancestors Baisnab poetry had been reduced almost to a mechanic art its conceptions had become stereotyped and its language conventional. But its faith its religious enthusiasm had by that time filtered down through all the crudities of its surroundings into a simple unquestioned and habitual form of religiosity. Its spiritual essence alone survived its commonplaces and conceits, its pedantry and formalism had lost much of their force and had become effete conventionalities. Although Kabi poetry in its theme and diction is generally conventional and mechanically reproductive yet it concerns itself chiefly with the essential significance of Baisnab poetry its devotional fervour its emotional appeal and not directly with its metaphysical or psychological banalities. It is

imperfectly commu-  
nicated to Kabi poetry

the habitual and unreflecting faith of the people, unaffected

Kabi poetry is not  
cultured, factitious or  
sectarian

by any scholastic or sectarian pre-  
possessions, that supplied the chief  
ingredient of Kabi-poetry. In this  
sense, Kabi-literature is neither scho-

lastic nor cultured, nor is it factitious and professional  
None of the Kabiwalas was literate enough to enter into  
the intricacies of emotional or metaphysical subtlety nor  
had they any sectarian tradition behind to implant in them  
anything other than its simple spiritual significance which  
had percolated and spread down even to the masses They  
had taken Baisnabism *en masse* and not in its details, in  
its essence and not in its accidents, though they tacitly  
accepted and mechanically repeated its conceits and its  
imagery, its time-honoured dogmas and doctrines

It would be unjust to institute a comparison between  
the Baisnab lyrics and the songs of the Kabiwalas, but  
it must be noted that the latter in many cases debased  
and vulgarised, while they borrowed, the ideas and concep-  
tions of Baisnab poetry One particular section of  
Baisnab poetry, remarkable for its passion and its poetic  
quality, which is generally grouped under the heading of  
*Prema-banchilla* (প্রেমবাঁচিলা) is practically non-existent in  
Kabi-literature Unable to enter into its subtlety, its  
romantic fervour and its mystic spiritualism, the Kabiwalas  
could not speak in the same rapturous accents nor with the  
same nobility of sentiment It is true that both these  
species of literature were never intended originally to be  
literature at all, they never consisted of deliberate literary  
creation by self-conscious artists

Kabi-poetry is not  
a deliberate literary  
creation of self-con-  
scious artists

Religious enthusiasm, on the one  
hand, and popular amusement, on the  
other, supplied the motive of its  
making in each case, and in so far as each species adhered

to this original motive each assumed its distinctive character. The peculiar conditions under which it was produced modified the form and tendency of the production of each kind. But while under the stress of a new born religious fervour and its lyric and mystic idealism the creations of Baisnab poets were lifted into the region of pure poetry, the more mundane object and secular interest of the Kabiwalas dragged them down to a dead level of uninspired commonplace. It is indeed very doubtful whether a great deal of Kabi poetry can, with the utmost allowance be regarded as strictly literary so deeply had the peculiar condition of its making affected the character of its production.

It was primarily a form of popular amusement.

Kabi poetry must be primarily regarded as a form of popular amusement affording no doubt an interesting field of study to the student of

social history but hardly to be considered by the historian of literature except in so far as it rises to the level of literature.

Although essentially a popular form of amusement composed chiefly by popular poets and transmitted through oral tradition yet it must be noted that Kabi songs hardly bear any resemblance to what may be

But it is not strictly folk literature or popular poetry.

strictly called folk literature or popular poetry. It would be a mistake to compare them for instance to the

medieval European ballads either in form or spirit. The Kabi literature no doubt possesses the same dramatic or mimetic qualities and choral peculiarities but they lack the condition of communal composition which is essential to balladry and the poetical content is not, as in balladry narrative nor is it submitted to an epic process of transmission. It is not simple anonymous and objective in the sense in which the ballads are but it bears all the marks of indivi-



dual authorship and all the conventionalities of a literary tradition, it has never shown, in its growth and development, any tendency towards the romance, the story or the chronicle so as to take it out of its original dramatic and choral structure. The songs of the illiterate Kabiwalas no doubt enter into a vital rapport with the people who compose the nation, the people who are far more puissant and important in national history than the so-called cultivated minority. At the same time, if they constitute popular poetry at all, they represent only a very narrow type of that species for the true function of popular poetry is the interpretation of the people to themselves and and the creation of a popular ideal, which function these songs discharge only partially, while the forms and expressions of this literature are much less the property of the race than of the individual. These poets were no doubt born among the people<sup>1</sup>, lived with the people and understood perfectly their ways of thinking and feeling, hence their direct hold upon the masses of whom many a modern writer is contentedly ignorant. But these poems, meant for popular entertainment and bearing a close contact with the people, hardly ever speak of the people themselves and possess little or no democratic sympathy or exaltation. They are thoroughly preoccupied with the conventional themes of earlier poets, though their treatment may be a little popular, and they even express themselves in conventional diction and imagery. They

It is the product of a conventional literary tradition

<sup>1</sup> Kabi poetry counted its votary amongst the lowest classes. Except Haim Thākur, Rāsu and Nṛsimha, Rām Basu and a few others, the Kabiwalas belonged to the lowest social grades of a *muchi* (shoemaker), a *mayanā* (sweetmeat vendor), a *chhitā* (carpenter), a *feringi* (half-bred Eurasian), *svarna-kār* (goldsmith), a *tāmī* (weaver), etc. In this catholicity it resembles Baiṣṇabism itself.

have got a literary tradition behind them the banalities of which they cannot always transcend and overstep into true democratic poetry

But this literary tradition they had modified in their own way, particularly through circumstances and conditions under which they composed and over

representing a phase of decadence of the earlier art.

which they had no control and partly through an inherent lack of a thorough

grasp upon the realities of old poetry

The themes which they handled had possessed in the hands of older poets, qualities capable of evoking a great art but the less exalted treatment of the Kabiwalas could hardly work them up into new shapes of beauty with sufficient power and subtlety. It was their misfortune to represent an essentially decadent art. Every literature to speak in metaphorical language which must not be strained, passes through the necessary stages of birth growth decline and death. In these metrical exercises of the Kabiwalas we see not the adult manhood of old literature but its senile decrepitude. The poetry is reminiscent rather than spontaneous it is reproductive and imitative rather than, in the true sense creative. It is true that most of the songs which the Kabiwalas extemporised were unsought and unpremeditated yet in their homage to old world conventions in style theme, and literary treatment, they belonged to a decaying dynasty the prestige of which, in spite of their belated efforts had been fast vanishing.

But even in their imitativeness, they could not always reproduce the fine shades and graces of old poetry its weight its elevation and its profun-

Its inability to reproduce the finer shades and graces of earlier poetry

dity. There are many things, no doubt, in *Baṛṇab padāvalis* which are not in any sense commendable but in

their places and as a part of the whole they may pass

off without much incongruity. But in the songs of the Kabiwalas these things, severed from their true relations and from their natural surroundings of beauty, assumed an incongruous independence and a distorted shape, incompatible with artistic or spiritual excellence, especially as it is often dressed in weak phraseology

The spirit of ancient poetry inadequately represented

and loose versification. The Baisnab

poetry unfolds before our vision such an extensive realm of beauty that its

occasional deformities and blemishes

are easily passed over, nor do they appear in their natural state artistically inconsistent. Apart from all questions of spiritual interpretation, the ideal of love depicted in Baisnab poetry may have, from a layman's stand-point, departed in places from the strictness of propriety or decorum, but if after a study of the poetry in its entirety, a man does not rise with an impression of its beauty and nobility, then the conclusion is obvious that either he has not read it properly or that he is impervious to all sense of its excellence. In the infinite varieties of amorous situation, the description of Rādhā as a *lhanditā* heroine or of Kṛṣṇa as an arch-deceiver may have, leaving aside other explanations, an artistic justification of enhancing the beauty of this poetry by adding to it an element of playful

toying (*chhalanā*) or wayward vagary

An instance drawn from Kabiwalas' conception and treatment of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa

(*bañchanā*) or even a sterner element of distressing poignancy, yet whatever may be the interpretation, it

certainly does not dwarf our concep-

tion of the finer spirit of Baisnab poetry. Ignoring the considerations of sensual presentation or spiritual explanation, the central and essential idea of Baisnab poetry, embodied in the conception of Rādhā's *kalanka*, has an emotional suggestion of its own, which adds an element

of intensity and earnestness to the love of Rādhā as the type of a heroine who foregoes all for love. In the poetry of the Kabiwalas these elements severed from their natural context and regarded by themselves assume the somewhat repellent intensity of impertinent interest. Having realised full well that the depth and beauty of Baisnab poetry were beyond themselves or their audience they had selected and isolated for representation only those portions of it which would appeal more directly by their effective but transient vulgarity. The Kabiwalas therefore give consciously or unconsciously more prominence to *kalerita* and *ckhalau* over anything else of Baisnab love-poetry and these elements in their incongruous context are often presented with such unadorned boldness and repulsive relief and with such ill suited lightness of touch that they become in the end thoroughly inartistic. Kṛṣṇa's wantonness is carried to a frivolously forbidding extent and Rādhā's sense of the affront thus dealt out by the unfaithful lover is marked by a singular lack of self respect and sense of dignity. The process is the process of dethroning a god for the purpose of humanising a scoundrel.

Rādhā and her companions are eternally complaining with all the silliness of plaintive sentimentality of the endless amours of the ever deceitful lover but after all she takes them very lightly and no great persuasion is necessary to reconcile her in the end to her lover. She laments she weeps but her laments are hollow and her tears are idle. The apologist may contend that all these are mere forms of divine sportiveness (খেলা হুল or লীলা) and that we must not judge them by secular standards. But we must guard against bringing in spiritual considerations in extenuation of artistic inadequacy although we cannot it is true altogether steer ourselves clear of the

question of spiritual interpretation. There is no doubt the dictum of the author of *Ujjvala-Nīlamanī* <sup>1</sup> that what is true of Śrīkṛṣṇa is not true of the ordinary lover, but even Rūpa Gosvāmī himself admits that Kṛṣṇa is conceived as the ideal lover, *natachūdāmanī* <sup>2</sup> or *rasika-śekhara* <sup>3</sup>. It is not our purpose here to enter into any discussion of the inner significance of Baisnab poetry or its metaphysical conceptions, what is intended here to be stated is that from the layman's standpoint of artistic criticism, the *abhimān* of Rādhā, as we often find it in the songs of the Kabīrvalas, has got hardly any reality in it nor has the love of Kṛṣṇa any deep-rooted strength of feeling which alone would have lifted it into the highest sphere of poetry. So long as the heroine realises that she possesses a strong hold upon her lover's love, the interruption of its smooth course through occasional sportiveness or incidental vagary adds a peculiar charm to the elements of *abhimān*, but when the offence is great and involves faithlessness and disgrace which strikes at the very root of the passion itself, the heroine dishonours herself when she takes it lightly or sits down to villifying, complaining or indulging in a sentimental process of elaborate *abhimān*. Such things hardly possess any appeal artistic or otherwise, and as such should hardly find a place in nobler types of poetry.

One or two illustrations will make out the point we are trying to indicate. Here is a song of Rām

<sup>1</sup> *Ujjvala Nīlamanī*, 1 18 21 (Nirnaya Sāgar Ed., pp. 11 24)

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

<sup>3</sup> Kṛṣṇadās Kabīrāj's commentary of *Śrīkṛṣṇa Kānāmṛta* on Śl. 1, 3, 11 etc. This epithet is common enough in Baisnab works.

Baru in which Rudhī is speaking, as a *khanditā* heroine<sup>1</sup>

সাধ করে কয়েছিলাম হুঁহুঁর মান  
 শ্যামের তার হল অপমান ।  
 শ্যামকে সাধলেন না ফিরে চাইলেন না  
 কণা কইলেন না রেখে মান ॥  
 ক্রমা সেই রাগের অরুমাগে রাগে রাগে গো  
 পড়ে পাছে চন্দ্রাবলীর নববাগে ।  
 ছিল পূর্বের বে পূর্বরাগ আবার একি অপূর্বরাগ  
 পাছে রাগে শ্যাম রাধার আদম ভুলে যায় ॥  
 শ্যাম কাল মান কবে গেছে, কেমন আছে মূর্তি মেনে আঁহ ।  
 করে আমায় বকিতে গেল কাব কুণ্ডে বকিতে  
 হয়ে পণ্ডিতে মরি মরিম প্রেমে মরি ।  
 ছলে বৃষ্টি মন ছলে গেছে শ্যামরাগ ॥  
 মাগে বুঝি মন দূরে থেকে চপে মেখে গো  
 কর কিনা কর কণা ছেকে ।  
 যদি কাতরে কণা কর তবে নয় অপ্রণয়  
 অমনি সেখ গো ধরে ছটি রাঙ্গা পায় ॥  
 যার মানেব মানে আমার মানে সে না মানে  
 তবে কি কোরবে এ মানে ।  
 মাধবের কত মান, না হয় তার পরিমাণ  
 মানিনী হুঁহুঁ যার মানে ॥  
 যে পক্ষে বখন বাক্যে অভিমান  
 সেই পক্ষে রাগতে হয় সমান ।  
 রাগতে শ্যামের মান গেল গেল মান  
 আমার কিসের মান অপমান ॥

And then consider how the companions of Rādhā, in a tone bantering but shamelessly humiliating to themselves, are enticing the shame-faced false lover now seated comfortably in Mathurā

কও কথা বদন তোল, হও সদয় এট ভিক্ষা চাই ।  
 বাধাব অধৈর্য্যে এলান আপার্য্যে,  
 তোমাব কংসবাজ্যেব অংশ লতে আসি নাট ।  
 অধোমুখে যদি থাক শ্যাম কুবুজাব দোহাট ॥  
 তোমাব সহাস্য বদনে নাই বহস্য,  
 কেন মাধব আজ দাসীৰ প্রতি ঔদাস্য,  
 চাও চন্দ্রাস্য নহে প্রকাশ্য, বেন সর্ব্বদ লতে এলেন ভাবছ তাই ॥<sup>1</sup>

And here is a piece of undisguised raillery by Kubjā the new mistress

কুবুজা কহিছে তুমি বাজা এই মধুভুবনে ।  
 বাজাব উপবে বাজা আছে আগে জানিনে ॥  
 ওহে গোবিন্দ বড সন্দ হতেছে,  
 কবেছ প্রেমধাব তুমি কোন্ বমণীৰ কাছে ।  
 তুমি কবে কাব দাসত্ব, পেবেছ বাঙ্গত্ব,  
 সে তত্ত্ব জান্তে এসেছে তোমাব ॥  
 আছে খব নে পথে বসে, কে বমণী সে,  
 শ্যাম কি ধাব কিছু তাব ।  
 হলে আমাদেব ভূপতি, ওহে যত্নপতি,  
 কোটালী কবেছিলে কোন বাজাব ॥  
 খতে লেখা আছে, ও শ্রীহবি,  
 খাতক ত্রিভঙ্গ শ্যাম, মহাজন এজকিশোবী ।  
 মনে আতঙ্ক কবি ওই, ত্রিভঙ্গ শুন কই,  
 তোমা বই চেবা সহি আব হবে কাব ॥ (বামবন্ধ)<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Prācīn Kabi-saṅgraha*, p 35

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* pp 35 36

And lastly listen to the ingenious but hardly authentic justification of the false lover by himself :

আমি কাহার কেনা নই সন্তানধীন রসময়ী  
 সন্তানশ্রমেভায়ে বাধা মন ।  
 ছিল রাবণের মহোদধি এই কুণ্ডলা কল্যাণেরে সহি ।  
 কলমে বাসনা পেতে আমার দিগেছিলাম বব তার  
 হয়ে কৃষ্ণরূপ ঘুড়াব তার জীবন ।  
 তনিলে সমীত সকল বিবরণ ॥  
 অতিশ্রুত সহি ছিলাম কুণ্ডলার  
 সেই অতিষ্ঠা পুরাতো নাথের ব্রজ হতে  
 আসিতে হইরাছে মধুরার ।  
 তা বলে বৃন্দে সখি হরোনা অণ্ডরে ছাখী  
 আমি রাধা বই কারক নইত কখন ॥

It is needless to comment on the tone and spirit of these passages but the history of love revealed in their course will sufficiently indicate the extent to which the Kabiwalas debased the tenderness passion and spirituality of earlier Baisnab poetry

This spiritual inadequacy of the songs of the Kabiwalas necessarily involved a lowering of the literary ideal There is no doubt here and there in Rām Basu or in Haru Thākur, a desire for nobler utterance yet generally speaking the entire mentality of the Kabi poets was never of a superior order They are artists who still handle worn-out themes in old formal ways without the earlier grasp upon them without fervour of conviction and without anything of perceptive delicacy Some of the Kabiwalas no doubt,



were men of high natural endowments but they moved less freely within a narrow and degenerated sphere of thoughts and ideas. The mental attitude of their audience and submission to its influence no doubt proved unwholesome to the growth of their poetry, but they themselves were incapable of interpreting life in any large and original way and therefore limited themselves, wisely or unwisely, to ministering chiefly unto the curiously uncritical habits of the time which demanded nothing more than the transient excitement of cheap rhetoric and cheap ideas. In the period in which they flourished, men had been deprived of a free political and social life, a central capital, the peace and security of an ordered existence and other conditions adequate to the intellectual requirements of an expansive literature. The old style having fallen into decay, the literary ideal could never be very high nor were the opportunities abundant enough for unfolding whatever potentialities this poetry possessed.

The Kabi-literature, therefore, among its crowd of agreeable poems, had produced very few master-pieces, very few works of superb genius destined to immortality. There is a carelessness, a want of balance, a defect of judgment in the choice of materials and then management, a slovenliness of execution throughout the work of this period. Care and grace of style can be expected in the literary craftsman who writes down his thoughts at leisure, for he can rewrite his sentences, recast his phrases, remould stanzas, thus achieving the proper art of style, but the Kabiwalas, who were hardly a lettered class of leisured writers, could never find abundance of time or patience to court the lugubrious muse. They made use of whatever poetic talents they

possessed in contributing to the transient amusement of a hardly less illiterate public and their forensic style, which can only be elevating when the inspiration itself is noble, naturally resulted in a dead level of the common place or the conventional

To arrest the fugitive attention of the audience, the Kabiwalas make abundant use of the borrowed tricks of conventional rhetoric. It is certainly true that out of ten verses even whole stanzas may be found which do not lack power but, generally speaking beauty and refinement yield place to a constant striving after effect to an attempt at clever and spirited improvisation wanting entirely in strength art, or polish, though capable through its effective forensic

qualities of awakening the easily excitable popular enthusiasm. They composed too fast to compose well and their critical sense was not sufficiently strong to save them from all the faults of fatal fluency and fertility. Hence we find the fault of repetition frequency of stock phrases monotony of identical form and ideas singular baldness of details childish jangle of weakly though effective words which are unavoidable in oral composition but which appear dull and flat in reading. The sentiment is too often trite and the ideas conventional and the author in his futile attempt to disguise his want of originality by frequent affectation and constant use of stilted devices, becomes thoroughly artificial and unconvincing. One of the tricks which is peculiarly favoured by the Kabiwalas for the purpose of impressing upon the fickle sensibilities of an uncritical audience is the excessive use of alliteration and pun. When used with moderation and judgment alliteration is no doubt

Its affectation and artificiality

Its habit of punning and use of alliteration

one of the most useful ornaments of poetical expression and it has not yet lost all its charm in poetry, but the Kabiwalas succumbed to the delusion of imagining that alliteration and punning are the chief ends of poetry. It is needless to cite instances, when instances are so abundant but the following passage<sup>1</sup> as well as the passage quoted at p 323 will sufficiently indicate the excess to which this pernicious habit was carried

গেল গেল কুল কুল, যাক্ কুল, তাহে নহি আকুল ।

লগ্নেছি বাহাব কুল সে আগাবে প্রতিকুল ।

যদি কুলকুণ্ডলিনী অলুকুলা হন্ আগায

অকুলেব তবী কুল পাবে পুনবায ।

এখন ব্যাকুল হবে কি লুকুল হাবাবো নহি ।

তাহে বিপক্ষে হাসিবে যত বিপ্লুচয ॥ (বামবস্তু)

Even sometimes in these strivings after alliterative appeal, the poet completely sets at defiance even ordinary rules of grammar and composition

একে নবীন ববস তাতে স্তমভা কাব্যবসে বসিকে ।

মাধুর্য্য গান্তীর্ঘ্য তাতে দান্তীর্ঘ্য নাই

আব আব বৌ যেমন ধাবা ব্যাপিকে ।

অধৈর্য্য হেবে তোবে স্বজনী ধৈর্য্য ধবা নাহি যাব ॥ <sup>2</sup>

Leaving aside a few deservedly popular pieces which indicate a desire for untrammelled and spontaneous utterance, we find throughout the work of the Kabiwalas an abuse of the imagination and of the intellect. It cannot be denied indeed that some of the Kabiwalas

<sup>1</sup> *Sambād Prabhākar*, Āśvin 1261, p 11, *Gupta ratnoddhār* ed Kedār nāth Bandyopādhyāy, p 151, *Prītiḡīti*, p 474

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in *Sādhanā*, 1302 BS, pt II p 65

possessed undoubted poetic powers but they often neglected natural sentiment and made an exhibition of artfulness. The founts of earlier inspiration had been failing and poetry itself coming to be regarded as the means of displaying elaborate conceits, extravagant fancies, bold metaphors and excessive hyperboles. Many of these poets are martyrs to verbal nicety. Fancy is preferred to sense and exuberance of imagery to chastened style. That the education of the Kabīwalas lacked in scholastic strictness produced one good effect, no doubt, namely that whenever they turned to familiar themes or depended upon their natural genius, their poetry was marked by a sincere homeliness and a swinging and dashing lyricism rare in the precise and meditative utterances of latter-day poets; yet this very lack of training fostered in them a false and uncritical taste in the choice of poetical ornaments and a singular indifference to the value of artistic restraint. Their poetical style is often very diffuse and

Its diffuse and inflated style

inflated, if not trite or given to futile adorning of trivialities and it is very

seldom that we meet with sustained flights of condensed, poignant and forcible utterance. There are very few songs which are impeccable in every line or studied in every phrase not to speak of the obvious faults of rhyme, rhythm and metre. The extreme fluency and prolixity of the Kabīwalas stood effectually in the way of their attaining well balanced artistic effect. The poet is very seldom able to sustain his inspiration from the beginning to the end of his composition. In the beautiful song of Nīlāī Baurīgī already referred to<sup>1</sup>

*Saahśāda Prabhākara Agrahāyaṇa* I. 1281 p. 7; *Kedārnāth Bandyopādhyāy Gupta-ratnoddhāra*, p. 176; *Kabīrśāstrīger Gītā*, p. 81; *Saahśāda-saahgraha* II. 1047; *Prīti-gītā* p. 528

বঁধুব বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ।  
 শ্যামেব বাঁশী বাজে বুঝি বিপিনে ॥  
 নহে কেন অঙ্গ অবশো হইলো  
 সূধা ববিবিলো শ্রবণে ॥  
 বৃক্ষডালে বসি পক্ষী অগণিতো  
 জড়বতো কোন্ কাবণে ।  
 যমুনার জলে বহিছে তবঙ্গ  
 তব হেলৈ বিনে পবনে ॥  
 একি একি সখি একি গো নিরখি  
 দেখে দেখি সব গোধনে ।  
 তুলিয়ে বদনো নাহি যায় ভ্রণে  
 আছে যেন হীন চেতনে ॥  
 হায়, কিসেবো লাগিয়ে বিদবণে হিয়ে  
 উঠি চনকিয়ে সবনে ।  
 অকস্মাতো একি প্রেমনো উপজিলো  
 সলিলো বহিছে নয়নে ॥  
 খাবো একদিন শ্যামেবো ঐ বাঁশী  
 বেজেছিলো কাননে ।  
 কুলো লাজো ভয়ো হবিলে তাহাতে  
 সবিতেছি গুৰুগজনে ॥

the beginning and some of the concluding lines are fine but we are left with a sense of inadequacy with regard to the whole and individual parts of the song There are queer ups and downs in artistic execution, and the poetical inspiration is not kept up uniformly throughout Those who pin their poetical faith upon "patches," the great mass of Kabi-songs presents examples of certainly great beauty but taken as a whole, the poetry is unequal in merit and

Its inequality

side by side with higher flights, there are depths of bathos hardly to be paralleled. The common allurements of narrative interest of varied subject or of striking idea are so rare in this poetry that it is necessary for the poet to screw his inspiration always to the sticking place so that he may not fail. But to reach the full white heat, the steady blaze of poetic emotion is not uniformly possible with these poets, and therefore it is not surprising to find a large amount of tolerable and even flat and uninspired verse obtaining side by side with songs of intensely moving quality. Coming to the less inspired later Kabiwalas we find in them a bold use of colloquialism which is sometimes appealing no doubt, through its veracity and raciness but which very frequently degenerates into unlicensed slang or unredeemed verbiage. No one would seriously contend, for instance that the following lines of Bholā Mayarā though racy and ingenious contains a single spark of poetry

নাটুর নীচে নাড়ু নড়ে লাঙ্গু নর ভাই ।  
 হৃদ্যবনে বসে দেখে বদ্ব বোনের রাই ॥  
 ঘোমটা খুলে চোমটা মারে কোমটা বড় সারি ।  
 তিন লক্ষ লক্ষা পায়, হাণ্ডে শুক সারি ॥  
 ঝাঝা মেয়ের বেটা হোলো অন্যায়্যার চাঁদ ।  
 আঁঠুনি জবাব দাও নইলে বাধবে বড় কাদ ॥

But in spite of this artistic inadequacy of Kabi poetry, it should never be relegated to the lumber room of literary curiosity nor is this poetry

*Its lack of superior  
 qualities but its true  
 poetic spirit*

to be dismissed as a mere paraphrase of the commonplaces of Baiṣṇab poetry. It is true that the works of the Kabiwalas hardly exhibit any profundity, poignancy, or weight. It is not marked by supreme

splendour of imagination or exuberance of inventive thought. These poets have none of the disturbing tyranny of violent passion or the ecstatic elevation of superior inspiration. But, after all is said, it cannot but be admitted that some of the despised Kabiwalas *are* poets and not poetical curiosities, and that if Kabi-poetry does not always attain a high level of poetical excellence, the level it occasionally reaches is striking enough as a symptom of the presence of the true poetical spirit which it is often impossible to detect for years together in other periods of literary history. Even in the emphatically minor Kabiwalas—often persons quite unknown or unimportant in literature as persons—we come across charming things, lines and phrases and stanzas of exquisite beauty, indicating a general diffusion of the poetic spirit which had made even such inferior songsters beautifully articulate.

One important and characteristic feature of Kabi-poetry consists in the fact that although it was in no sense popular poetry dealing, as it did, with conventional themes in conventional form yet it expressed, through its poets who were of the people, what the people had of the noblest and sincerest as well as of the grossest, and in virtue of this it could be appreciated by the people at large. It may be true that popular appreciation is not the sure touchstone of poetic quality, yet we would lapse into the error of academical dogmatism if we do not take into account the hold which this poetry possessed upon the popular mind as one of the important factors in our consideration. It is salutary as well as significant that no abrupt line divided the poets from the huge uncultivated populations, often contemptuously set down as “the masses.” Even while

dealing with the conventional Baisnab themes Kabi poetry is marked by the sincere and unaffected religiousness of the popular mind if not always by the true spirit of Baisnab literature. In art in ideas in poetical inspiration the Kabiwalas may not be regarded as the true inheritors of ancestral genius yet in honest religious feeling, in sound and simple faith they do not compare unfavourably with their great predecessors. But it is not here that we find the genius of Kabi poetry finding its fullest scope. The conditions under which it might have become a legitimate development of Baisnab-poetry had been non-existent and, fortunately or unfortunately, Kabi poetry had come under conditions and influences totally different. The excellence of Kabi poetry rests therefore not so much upon its rehandling of older themes but upon its presentation of less pretentious but more homely and natural themes which if these poets were not the first to treat they were at least the first to work up with considerable effectiveness. Rām Basu's treatment of the themes of *biraka* and *āgamānī* is widely known and deserves its reputation but in these, among other themes not Rām Basu alone but most of the Kabiwalas excelled and found a congenial scope for the display of their natural poetical genius. It is not, however in the themes themselves so much as in the treatment that the characteristic feature of Kabi poetry is seen at its best. We shall have to come back to this point later on; but it may be noted here that these songs, in their sincere force of natural passion and affection and in their simple observation of common things form a class by themselves the value of which can never be over-estimated, although most of them have been so

Its sincere religiousness

Naturalness and sincerity of its songs.



hackneyed to us in various ways or have been so queerly dressed in a diction, long out of fashion, that even respectable critics have been led to treat them with unfeigned contempt proverbially associated with familiar things. In these *brāh̃a* songs, however, the note of simplicity and sincerity is unmistakable. There is no thinking about thinking or feeling about feeling, but honest human passion is expressed with a clear vision and with exquisite directness of speech. These poets sang no longer of the loves of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa or find in them a suitable frame-work for voicing their individual or universal human sentiment. They sing of natural human beings, often of themselves, and of the naturalistic human passion, and their expression of the triumph and despair of love, if somewhat crude and even gross, is not sicklied over with reflectiveness as in most modern poets. In the *āgamanī* songs, again, the domestic atmosphere of a Bengali home

Tenderness and  
human interest in  
*āgamanī* songs

with its simple joys and sorrows,  
which find expression in the picture  
of Menakā the mother and Umā the  
daughter,<sup>1</sup> creates a peculiar charm of sweet and tender  
homeliness which is rare in modern poetry. These few

<sup>1</sup> This trait also expresses itself in the *goṣṭha* of *Sakhīsambād* where Yaśodā is generally speaking to the boy Kṛṣṇa. It cannot be determined how far in their *bhabānī bīṣayak* songs, the Kabiwalas influenced or were influenced by the writers of devotional ditties who flourished by their side. There is, however, considerable similarity of trait between the *mālsī* of Rām prasād and his followers and the *āgamanī* of the Kabiwalas, who were undoubtedly influenced by the special *āgamanī* or *bīṣayā* songs of Rām prasād or Kamlākānta. Similarly there is some general resemblance between the *brāh̃a* songs of the Kabiwalas and the love lyrics of the *tappā*-writers. There must have been some amount of mutual influence and it is quite possible that both these represent phases of a certain humanising tendency of the literature of the age in which they flourished.

wood notes may lack refinement and polish but they are exceedingly tender, simple and human. And it is by force of its tenderness, its simplicity, and human interest wherever these qualities may be found, that Kabi poetry is so appealing. In their form, again, these songs possess not much of stylistic grace and their bold use of colloquialism is often bare and unadorned. Yet the veracity of the vernacular and the raciness of the spoken idiom impart to these songs a charm of their own, easy, direct and simple yet plastic and artful in their very want of art.

It will be amply clear from this that Kabi poetry cannot be regarded merely as a belated product of the Baisnab school although in a distant way it attempted to carry on the older tradition

Its permanent  
literary value

It possesses characteristic trait of  
its own which marks it off as a

distinct though not independent type of national utterance. If it is not music yearning like a god in pain it is characterised by full throated ease and robust healthy mentality at least in certain spheres. Higher flights of poetry were unsuited to its hard and narrow environment, the rambling life of its votaries stored their minds with little learning or culture; they indulged in metrical exercises partly as the means of earning livelihood under the not-too-liberal patronage of the isolated aristocracy of the priests and the princes of the plain democracy of poor peasants in the remote villages, of the respectable middle class of thrifty merchants and banians in the crowded cities. Though the roar of the cannon at Plassey or Udaynala was but heard faintly by them and they were quite oblivious of the world around them living and moving in an isolated social world or a conventional poetic world of their own: yet the latter half of 18th century with its

confused energy, diffused culture and political, social and mental chaos did not demand nor could inspire a literature of great value. There was hardly any leisure for serious writing, what was wanted was trifles capable of affording excitement, pleasure and song. This poetry, therefore, was never meant for a critical audience, and critical sense or practised art the Kabiwalas hardly possessed any. They lacked ideas and ideal utterance and were constantly hampered by the incubus of a conventional literary tradition, there is a good deal of sad stuff in their verse-impromptu, all this and more is admitted. But in spite of these drawbacks and difficulties, Kabi-poetry, in its best aspect, is an entirely homespun production, kindly, genial and indulgent, capable of awakening and keeping popular enthusiasm and possessing simplicity and liquidity of utterance which draws its bone and thew and sinew from the language and ideas of the people themselves who begat them and with whose central life-force they have an unconscious and spontaneous rapport. If it is not popular poetry in the true sense of the term, being mainly derivative and reproductive, its contact with the people, while debasing its nature in certain respects, gave it at the same time a robust and healthy character and a sincere homeliness unaffected by literary prepossessions. Kabi-poetry, therefore, is of a complex character and defies all systematic analysis or rigid labelling as a recognised species to be put into a definite pigeon-hole marked out by the literary critic. Its merit is simplicity and its importance lies in the fact that although the Kabiwalas were incapable of producing the highest type of poetry or painting life broadly or powerfully, they served literature in their simple and homely way by furnishing a stimulus to the emotional life of the country. They succeeded very often in piercing through the gauds and

trimmings of an effete literary tradition and coming direct to the passion and emotion which throb and pulsate in the individual. The ground on which they tread is as plain and simple as that which the peasant daily treads upon with his uncouth feet yet it is from this common and universal soil that they draw their bracing and genial character. The Kabiwalas may not be the affluent inheritors of the spiritual estate of their ancestors but the apparently trifling things of art which had come down to them as their heir looms served amply for their unmistakable insignia of rank and status. With thousand and one faults to its credit the interest arising from the study of Kabi poetry is not except to the charlatan or the obtuse the undesirable interest which springs from the contemplation of superlative crudity and although universal popular appreciation as we have already stated is not the true test of poetic merit such popular valuation is not to be wholly rejected as a false index by the pedantry of cultured criticism.

Again it must be borne in mind that most of these compositions were *songs* and not lyric poems and must be judged as such. It is not possible nor desirable to estimate the value of songs by the standard by which we consider poetical compositions. We must appreciate a song through the ear and not feel it with the eye alone. It is not possible to convey an idea of its melody through an appreciative essay; it must be actually heard before its charm can be fully realised.

Its quality as songs and not merely lyric poems.

This remark applies equally to the case of *Bairāb Padābalis*. Those who have listened to Bairāb songs as well as to the songs of the Kabiwalas sung by an expert and tasteful singer, may appreciate their charmingness in

a greater degree. When seen in print these delightfully melodious things lose much of their appeal. It may be urged that this element should be rigidly ruled out of court in a strictly literary estimate, but it must not be forgotten that the fame of most of these Kabiwalas rests more upon their musical than upon their literary capacity, for some of them were trained musicians, not ill at verbal numbers but possessing considerable knack of composing what are rather disrespectfully called "words," and that the song-element preponderates in the various forms of ancient literature from Baisnab poetry down to *tappā*, *yātīā*, *pāñchālī* and therefore cannot be totally ignored in any estimate of old Bengali literature or its offshoot.

This brings us naturally to the question of the prosodic range of Kabi-poetry and the arrangement of its numbers, its metrical system being closely connected with the conditions of its musical expression. At first sight the verse-system of the Kabiwalas seem to follow no definite rule of arrangement, and this has been more than once severely denounced by puzzled critics.<sup>1</sup> The lines vary in length, are very apparently irregular in rhythm, imperfect in structure and uncertain in accentual or literal or syllabic arrangements, but a careful study will show that there is some sort of harmony in the midst of this apparent discord. It is, no doubt, true that in some of the Kabiwalas there is a hopeless indifference to prosodic regulations, that with regard to the number of words, syllables or accents required in each line, there is no hard and fast rule, and that as such it is impossible to analyse the

<sup>1</sup> See for instance the remarks of Rabīndranāth Thākura in *Sādhana* (1302 B. S.), pt. II, p. 65, reprinted in his *Lok Sūhṛta* under the heading 'Kabi Saṅgīta' at p. 41.

versification wholly by recognised systems of prosody, yet the verse of the Kabiwalas in spite of their frequent prosodic vagaries is self regulated following as it does a law of its own which varies naturally according to the irresistible ideal or emotional or melodious suggestion. The compositions must be primarily regarded as songs and in songs variation of long and short lines is immaterial and the rigid rules of metrical arrangement incapable of uniform application. They can be better sung than read. The words and lines are arranged as they naturally sing and fall into apparently inevitable song rhythm. But the whole effect is not inharmonious the music is clear and the movement of the rhymed verses of varying length is easy and natural. The spirit of this verse system is that of unbounded lawlessness bound only by a law of its own that of

resistance to the established ideal of stereo-typed verses like *payār* or *tripadī* which possess a more or less fixed system of letters or pauses. In this again Kabi poets are following

in the footsteps of their Baiṣṇab predecessors though with a great deal more of unhampered freedom. Whatever may be the defects the system gives us however variety of arrangement versatility of combination and infinite suggestion of new verse-forms

But in general structure of the songs the Kabiwalas followed a more or less definite system of rhyme-arrangement. The exact signification of much of their musical

technicalities is lost to us but for our purpose it is not indeed necessary to enter into details. It would be enough to state that the whole musical gamut

The general structure and rhyme arrangement of Kabi songs.

of each song is arranged in ascending and descending order into several divisions, bound to each other by a peculiar

system of rhyme-ending These divisions, in their succession, in each complete song, are *chitān*, *par-chitān*, *phukā*, *meltā*, *mahadā* (*saoyāri*, not present, however, in all songs), *khād*, and then second *phukā* and second *meltā*, and lastly *antarā*. If the word-composition is continued, then, *chitān*, etc., come again in their successive order. Now as to the system of rhyme-ending, the *chitān* and *par-chitān* rhyme together. The *phukā*, has a different rhyme-ending, so also *meltā* which however rhymes in its turn with *mahadā* and *khād*. The second *phukā* has an independent rhyme but the second *meltā* rhymes again with *mahadā*, while *antarā* closes with a different rhyme-ending altogether. The number of lines which each of these musical divisions contains is immaterial but it is essential that the lines should follow the rhyme-arrangement indicated above, and this gives, as in stanzaic poems or sonnets, a compactness of arrangement. Taking each division to contain one line we may indicate the rhyme-arrangement in a normal scheme in this way (five rhymes in all *abcde*)

- a Chitān*
- a Parichitān*
- b Phukā*
- c Meltā*
- c Mahadā*
- c Saoyāri*
- c Khād*
- d Second Phukā*
- c Second Mahadā*
- c Antarā*

<sup>1</sup> The earlier Kabī songs are, however, simple in structure, having generally *mahadā*, *chitān* and *antarā* only. There is some difference of opinion on this point and different accounts are given. According to a writer in *Bāndhab*, *Pouz*, 1282, p. 265, the four divisions of Kabī songs are *chitān*, *mukh* (or *mahadā*), *khād*, *antarā* or, in some cases, *chitān*, *dāyār*, *antarā*, *jhumair*.

Here is an illustration from one of the famous songs of Rām Basu arranged in the order indicated<sup>1</sup>—

- ১ চিতান। গত নিশিযোগে আমি হে বেবেছি এখন।  
 ১ পরচিতান। এল হে দেই আনার তারান।  
 ১ ফুকা। দাঁড়ারে চরায়ে বলে মা কই মা কই মা কই  
 আনার বেধা দাও ছুধিনীয়ে।  
 ১ মেলাতা। অগ্নি চব্বাহ পসারি উমা কোণে করি  
 আনন্দেতে আমি আমি নহ।  
 মহড়া। ওহে গিরি গা তোল হে, উমা এলেন হিমালয়।  
 সওয়ারি। উঠে হুগী হুগী বলে, চুগী কর কোণে  
 নুখে বল অর অর হুগী অর।  
 বাদ। ফড়া পুত্র এতি শাসন্য তার ঠাঙ্কিল্য করা নহ।  
 ২ ফুকা। আচল ধরে তারা বলে ছি মা কি মা মাগো  
 ওমা মা বাপের কি এমনি দার।  
 ২ মেলাতা। গিরি ভূমি যে অপরিত বুঝে না পার্কতী  
 অপরিত অখ্যাতি অগময়।

অতরা। মা হওয়া বত আলা বাপের মা এখন আর আছে তারাই জানে।  
 তিলেক না হেরিয়ে মর্মে ব্যথা পাই কর্ম ২৫৫ সদা দেখে টানে।

Of Kabi poetry before 1700, not much is known. Only a few names stand out of the general obscurity, but with regard to these names hardly any detail is known. The earliest if not the most illustrious Kabiwala of whom we have any record is one Gouñjlā Guñi. In the issue of the *Sambād Prabhākar*<sup>2</sup> already referred to Iśvar Gupta tells us that Gouñjlā flourished about 140 or 150 years<sup>3</sup> before his own time and this would place the

Gouñjlā Guñi the  
earliest known Kabi  
wala.

<sup>1</sup> *Prākṛita Kab saṅgraha*, pp 4-5; *Sambād Prabhākar* Kārtik 1261 p 4  
<sup>2</sup> *Sambād Prabhākar* Agrahāyaṇ 1 1261. I do not know on what  
evidence Nanda and Raghu have been placed by Dineah Chandra Sen  
(*Baṅg Bhāṣā O Sāhitya*, 2nd Ed., p 607) in the 11th century



poet as early as the beginning of the 18th century. Of this Kabiwala however, we know nothing except that he formed a party of professional songsters (*kabir dal*) who used to sing in "the house of the rich" and that he had three disciples who in later times became famous Kabiwalas, but we have no evidence to ascertain whether he was the originator of this form of singing or (which is more probable) whether he had his predecessors in the line from whom he inherited his art. Of his composition, only one or two fragments have been rescued from oblivion by the indefatigable editor of the *Prabhāṅka*,<sup>1</sup> from which we quote this curious literary specimen

এস এস চাঁদবদনি ।

এ বসে নিবসো কোবো না ধনি ॥

তোমাতে আমাতে একই অঙ্গ,

তুমি কলিণী, আমি সে ভৃঙ্গ,

অনুমানে বুঝি আমি সে ভুজঙ্গ,

তুমি আমার তায় বতন মণি ॥

তোমাতে আমাতে একই কাষা,

আমি দেহ প্রাণ তুমি লো ছায়া,

আমি নহাপ্রাণী তুমি লো মায়া,

মনে মনে ভেবে দেখ আপনি ॥

It will be noticed that both in theme and style these songs, if they are genuine, are more of the nature of the *tappā*, and we are told that in those days, such songs used to be sung, after the fashion of *tappās*, beginning with

<sup>1</sup> Also quoted in *Prāchīn Kabir sangraha*, p 127 8, *Gupta ratnoddhā*, p 205. The last four lines are omitted in *Banga Sāhitya Parichay*, vol II, p 1551.

Also a little fragment

প্রাণ তোবে হেঁবিয়ে ছুখো দূরে গেল মোর ।

বিরহ-অগ্নি হইলো শীতলো, জুড়িলো প্রাণে চবে ব ।

the *mañ idā* and then proceeding to the *chīṭān* and *antar-* while in later times singing used to begin, as already indicated with the *chīṭān*. From these little fragments however, nothing definite can be inferred with regard to the nature and history of Kabi poetry of this period.

The three disciples of Goṣṭjī alluded to above were Lālu Nandalāl Raghunāth Dās and Rāmji Dās. Their dates are unknown but they must have been living con-

siderably later than the middle of the 18th century for Hara Thākur (born about 1738) was a disciple of Raghu

while Nityānanda-dās Bairāgi (born about 1747) acknowledged Lālu Nandalāl if not Rāmji also as his master. Raghu had two other great disciples who in later times earned much poetic fame in Rāsu and Nṛsiṅha. Rāmji on the other hand found a worthy disciple in Bhabāni Banik who in his turn was the early patron and instructor of Rām Basu\* considerably junior to most of these Kabiwālas. These are the names of the earlier group of Kabiwālas

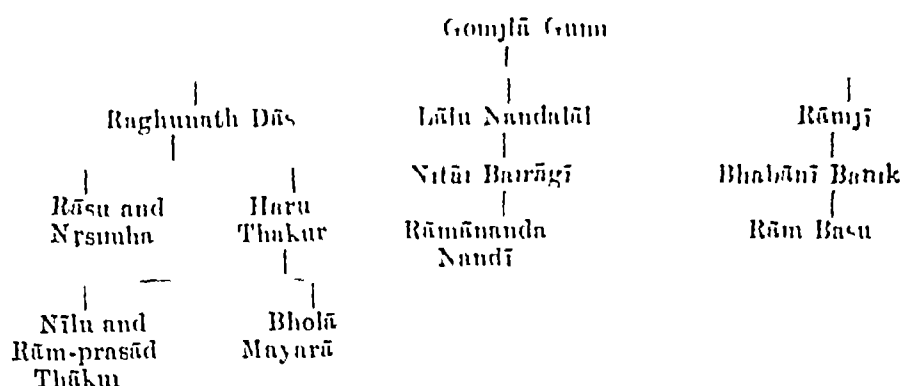
and the poetical inter relation between the earlier Kabiwālas. It will be noticed however that there is a sort of inter relation between the earlier Kabiwālas and all of them

Sāhibād Prabhākara Agrahāyaṇ 1201 p. 5; but one of the songs attributed to Nīlāl by Īśvar Gupta as well as by later collectors (*K b oalaalger Gīt* p. 116; *Uṣṭ ratnoddhār* p. 184) bears the bhāṇita of Rāmji Dās which fact would probably indicate if the attribution to Nīlāl is correct, that Rāmji and not Lālu Nandalāl was Nīlāl's G. re. Īśvar Gupta speaks of Lālu Nandalāl as having flourished roughly eighty years before his own time. This rough reckoning would put Nandalāl in the latter part of the 18th century 11th century however (p. 341 foot note 2) is too absurd a date for Nanda or Raghu. Opinions on this point vary but Īśvar Gupta seems to be more reliable than later unauthenticated conjectures. And what is given above is all that can be gathered from such reliable sources.

Sāhibād Prabhākara loc cit

Ibid, Āvin, 1201 p. 2

derived then poetical origin from Goṁṣṭhā Guṇin. The poetical relationship may be thus indicated



During the time of Goṁṣṭhā Guṇin and his three disciples, we have no record of the existence of 'rival parties' or of any 'poetical combats' which obtained so much in later times and which was indeed an essential characteristic of this form of entertainment. It was in the next generation that we hear for the first time of rivalries and oppositions between Nitāi Dās and Bhabānī, between Haru Thākuri and Kīśna Chandra Chāmakār (Kestā Muchi), between young Rām Basu and Haru Thākuri who must have been an old man at this time, as Rām Basu's 'reply' at one of these fights seem to imply.<sup>1</sup>

Of Lālu Nandalāl's composition  
Lālu Nandalāl Īśvai Gupta has given only one specimen which deserves to be quoted.<sup>2</sup>

হলো এই স্মরণোভো পীবিতে ।

চিবদিন গেল কাঁদিতে ॥

হয়েছে না হবে কলঙ্ক আমার গিয়েছে না যাবে কুল ।

ভুবেছি না ভুব দেখি পাতালো কত দুঃখ ।

<sup>1</sup> It runs thus ঠাকুর বাঁচবে না আর বিপদ দিন ।

তোমার চক্ষে ধরেছে পোকা স্বর্ণরেখা অতি ক্ষীণ ॥

<sup>2</sup> *Saṁbād Prabhākara*, loc cit

শেষে এই হোলো কাণ্ডারি পালানো তরনী লাগিলো ভাসিতে ॥

ধনোপ্রাণো মনো বোবনো দ্বিমে শরণো লইলাম যার

তবু তার মন পাওয়া সখি আমারে হোলো তার ।

না পুরিলো লাভো ঈশ্বরে বিচ্ছেদো মিছে পরিবাসো অগতে ॥

Of Raghu nāth no trustworthy account remains. Some

Raghu nāth Dās. say that he was a sat-śūdra while others think that he was a blacksmith

by caste.<sup>1</sup> According to a third view he was a weaver.<sup>2</sup>

Salkā and Guptipādā in turns have been noted as the place where he lived. Of his composition it is difficult to say

anything definite for although two or three fragments have come down to us containing his own *bhāṣiṭā* or

signature it is not perfectly clear that these songs were really of his own composition. The tradition is

current that Haru during his early years of pupilship under Raghu

used to get his productions corrected by his master and that, out of gratitude he used to attach

to them his master's *bhāṣiṭā*.<sup>3</sup> There is nothing to discredit this tradition which relates to a phenomenon not

rare or improbable in our literary history. The number of these songs however is limited and all of them, rightly

or wrongly have been attributed to Haru Thākur. It may be quite possible, however that some of these songs

were the genuine works of Raghu. But the disciples

*Baṅgabhaṅgār Lekhak*, p. 380

*N. byābhārat* B.S. 1131 p. 600

*Ibid.*, pp. 600-601; *Kabiyādladiger Gīt* (1862) p. 66; *Śaṅkbad Prabhākar* loc cit

Besides the one quoted here two such songs are given in *Kabiyādladiger Gīt* at pp. 73-75 and at pp. 91-93 in the collection of Haru Thākur's songs. These are also similarly given as Haru's in *Śaṅkbad Prabhākar* Poas 1261

gratitude seems to have got its own reward and to-day Haim Thākuri is supposed to be the author of all songs bearing Raghu's signature. The tradition alluded to, however, does not disallow the supposition that the revision of the master might have given an entirely new shape to the novice's composition, and as such, therefore, it is only in the fitness of things that the songs should go in the name of the master. It would be difficult to dogmatise in the absence of evidence, but these songs betray an elaborate structure and exuberance of fancy which some may connect with the early work of an ambitious youngster but which, on the other hand, may be supposed to bear indications of the master-hand. There are three songs extant of this description, of which one is, rightly or wrongly, attributed to Raghu in *Bangabhāsā Lekhak* and in *Pratigīti* without any mention of Haim. The song is this

বিকৃদ্ধ তাব জীবন যৌবন ।

এমন প্রেমেব সাধ কবে যেই জন, সে চাচে না আনি তাব যোগাই মন ॥  
যেখানেতে না বহিল নানো জনাব নান, সে কেনন অজান তাবে সঁপে প্রাণ

সেধে কেঁদে হবে গেছে বলধ ভাঙ্গন ।

একি প্রণয়েব বীতি নই শুনেছ এমন, কেহ স্মৃথে থাকে

কেহ চুঃথে জালাতন ।

শয়নে স্বপনে মনে যে যাবে ধোয়ায় সে জন তাহার যিবে নাহি চায়,

তথাপি না পাবে তাবে হতে বিম্ববণ ॥

সখি, পিবাতি পবন ধন জগতেব সাব, স্নজনে কুজনে হলে হয় ছাবখাব ।

সামান্য খেদেব কথা একি প্রাণসই, কাবেই বা কই, প্রাণে মবে বই,

ববে পবে আবো তাহে ববয়ে লাঙ্গন ।

যাবে ভাবি আপন নই, তাব এ বোধ নাই, এমন প্রেমেব মুখে

তাবো মুখে ছাই ।

হেন অবণ্য বোধনে বল আছে কি, এ হতে স্মৃথী একা যে থাকি

ধবে বেঁধে কবা কিনা প্রেম উপার্জন ॥

যার বস্ত্রাব লম্পট সট তার কি এ বোধ আছে

কি করিলে তব প্রেম অতীবোধ

অতি দৃঢ় উচ গলে হওয়া এ কেমন এ কেন মিলন না দেখি কখন

রম্য বলে কোথা মিলে ওখানে স্বজন ।

Of the last disciple of Gorañjī Rāmji Dā nothing  
Rāmji Dā absolutely is known except that  
Bhaktānī Bānk (a well as Nīdā Dā)

was his disciple and no work of his has survived. Only  
one song, however which is often attributed to Nīdā<sup>1</sup> bears  
the *bhakti* of Rāmji Dā. It is in no way very remarkable  
except for its ingenuity and fancifulness.

We hear also of Kā Muchi who remained outside this  
group but who belonged to this generation, as a very  
popular songster much sought after

Keñā Muchi (Kṛṣṇa  
Chandra Chāmakār) and respected, although obviously he  
was a shoemaker by caste. Even

later on Haru Thākūr, himself a Brāhman did not disdain  
to cross swords with him but we are told that Haru  
Thākūr, at that time a young man probably had the worse  
luck of the duel. It is a pity we do not know much of  
this mysterious figure. In spite of all his efforts Kṛṣṇa  
Gupta could not get hold of more than one incomplete  
fragment of this old *astut* itself not a very good specimen<sup>2</sup>

চরি কে বুঝে তোমার এ লীলে ।

ভাল প্রেম করিলে ।

হইলে তুপতি কুব্জা কুব্জী পাইবে শ্রীপতি

শ্রীমতী মাধারে রহিলে কুলে ।

<sup>1</sup> See n. 1 p. 343 foot note 1. It begins with

সে কেন মাধারে কলকিঁয় করে রাখিলে ।

শ্রীকৃষ্ণে নারি সখি ভাষে এ লীলে ।

The song, too long for quotation will be found in Gupta ratnodhar  
p. 161; K. biopāṇidiger Git p. 116

Bakānī Prabhākār Agrahāyap loc. cit

শ্যাম মেজেছ হে বেশ, ওহে স্বধীকেশ,  
 বাখালেব বেশ এখন কোথায় লুকালে ।  
 মাতুলো বধিলে, প্রতুলো কবিলে, গোপ গোপীকুলে,  
 গোকুলে অকুলে ভাসায়ে দিলে ॥

These earlier metrical essays of the Kabiwalas, to judge from the few extant fragments, are thus not so crude as to be contemptuously set aside, but they are at the same time not so creditable in view of the fact that simultaneously, in another sphere, Bhārat Chandra was charming his royal patron with his art and his music, Duṅgāprasād was painting his picturesque description of the descent of the sacred river, Rāmeśvara was narrating his exceedingly human and homely account of Śiba Gauṛī, and Rām-prasād was pouring out his soul in devotional ecstasy

In the effusions of the next generation we find better quality and a greater elaboration of Kabi-poetry Simulta-

neously with a certain advance in the artistic direction, both in form and substance, we hear of systematic organisation of “parties” (*kabī dal*) and “poetical combats” (*kabī-yuddha* or *kabī-ladāī*) which no doubt thrilled many a heart in days of yore but with which the literary historian has no practical concern except in so far as this circumstance affected the making of these songs and their poetical quality Into the details of these poetical ‘flytings,’ comparatively uninspiring to a modern reader, it is not necessary for our purpose to enter We need not narrate at length how Bhabānī Banīk, until reinforced by Rām Basu, must have found a tough opponent in Nitāi Banāgī<sup>1</sup>, how unlucky Haru Thākuri, an old veteran and winner of hundred “fights” as he was, had the humiliation of being worsted not only

Kabi song of the next generation (about or after 1760 to 1830)

Organisation of “parties” and poetical combats

keśā Much but also by a youngling like Rām Basu<sup>1</sup> or how Antony was attacked by Thākūr Subhā but paid him back in his own coin<sup>2</sup>. But this necessity of poetical rivalry in which quick and witty retort played a great part, and this contamination of popular applause which readily followed such cheap display of ingenuity went a long way in debasing the quality of Kāvī poetry until these poetical extemporisations degenerated into something even worse than the wagside verses that are hawked about and sold for a penny. The later Kabīwalas fell into the vital error of imagining that the sole end of poetical existence consisted in abusing and throwing mud at each other. Over the dull obscenities into which they entered it is better for the critic to keep silence but we may here recall for illustration one or two instances of these retorts although they do not always display either sobriety or good taste. At a certain sitting at the Sobhabazar Palace the parties of Rām Basu then an old veteran and of Nilu An instance of a witty retort quoted Thākūr (a disciple of Rām Basu's old rival Haru Thākūr) met Nilu was dead but Rām prāsād Thākūr was then the leader of the party. Rām prāsād began the attack.

নাইক রাম বেগের এখন সেকেলে পৌরোষ

এখন হল করে হেরেছেন রাম দোস—রামকাহিরেয় \* \* ॥

But immediately Rām Basu retorted

তেননি এই নীলুর দলে রামপ্রসাদ একটীন।

যেমন চাকের পীটে বাঁরা থাকে বাঁধনাক একটি দিন ॥

*Kabyabharat* 1811 pp 477-79

<sup>1</sup> Rām-gaṭī Nyāyaratna, *Daṅgabhaṇḍā O Bāhitya biśayak Prastāb* 3rd Ed. (1317) p. 106, footnote quoted in *Daṅgabhaṇḍā O Bāhitya* at pp 598-9. For notice of a fight between Antony and Bholā, see *Bādāyī* 1303 p. 59 et seq.



যেমন বাতভিখাবীৰ ধামা বওয়া থাকে একজন,  
 হবি নাম বলেনা মুখে পেছু থেকে চাল কুড়তে মন,  
 কন্মে অকন্মা তেমনি ঐ বামপ্রসাদ শাস্ত্রী  
 মন কাজেব কাজী ঠাটেব বাজী ( ভাই বে ) ।  
 ঠিক যেন ধোপাব বিশকন্মা,  
 যেমন বিখেশূত্র বিখেশূত্র, সিদ্ধিবস্ত বস্তহীন ॥  
 নীলমণি মলে, নীলমণি দলে ঢুকলে সিংভাস্ত্রা এঁডে বাছুবেব পাণে  
 যেমন নবাব মলে নবাব হলো উজীবাণি আড়াই দিন ।  
 যেমন মেগেব কাছে পেগেব বডাই ববে কবে জাঁক,  
 জনিবাব কন্মেতে কুডে, ভোজনে দেডে, বচনে পুডিবে কবেন থাক ॥  
 তেমনি শ্রীছাঁদ, এইপেটকো মুলুকচাঁদ, তবেন বামপ্রসাদ, ধবে স্বপ্নপ্রসাদ  
 যেমন জন্মে কছু হাত পোবে না দোলে লবেদাব আন্তীন্ ॥

It is useless to multiply instances <sup>1</sup> and most of them do not bear quotation, but the instance quoted, itself moderate enough in tone, will furnish a hint as to the excess to which the Kabi-fightings were carried. Once asked ironically by Thākuri Simha

বল হে আন্টু নি আমি একটি কথা জানতে চাই,  
 এসে এ দেশে এ বেশে তোমাব গায়ের কেন কুর্তি নাই ॥

Antony retorted in abusive language

এই বাঙ্গালাব বাঙ্গালীব বেশে আনন্দে আছি ।  
 হরে ঠাক্বে সিংহেব বাপেব জামাই কুর্তি টুপি ছেড়েছি ॥

While tearing his adversary to pieces, the Kabiwala incidentally tore to pieces all form, style or decency. The muses, who love solitude and devotional worship, could not be expected to stay at leisure and comfort amid the noise and tumult of this uproarious poetry

<sup>1</sup> For Rām Bāsu's attack on Nīlu and Rām prasūd on another occasion, see *Prāchīnkabi samgraha*, p 149, and his attack on Bholā

But Rāsu Nṛsiṁha, Haru Ṭhākura Nīlāi Bārāṅgi and Rām Basu (we hear little of Bhabāni Bāṅik ' the fame of his disciple Rām Basu having over shadowed his own reputation) who were the great champions of this generation of Kabi poetry were not mere versifiers and their productions were not wholly destitute of poetic merit. Of these Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha come earliest in chronology.

The mysterious double personality of Rāsu and Nṛsiṁha the two brothers who lived and worked together is a fascinating figure of this group of Kabiwalas. They were so united in their work which bear their *bhāṇita* in joint names that it is difficult and inequitable to separate them. It has been plausibly premised ' that one of them was the poet the other

Mayaṅk who was a disciple of Haru Ṭhākura *ibid* p. 148. See also Anāth Kṛpā Deb *Baṅger Kabita*, pp. 81-325; *Bharali*, *loc cit* etc.

Of Bhabāni Bāṅik who lived somewhere in Bagbazar Calcutta, and had some reputation as a Kabiwala in his time we practically know nothing except what Jāvar Gupta tells us in the *Sarkhad Prabhakar* Pons, 1281. This is what he says: তথ্যে যেণে ও শীলুঠাকুর ভোলা ময়রা একুটি একুটি প্রথমে হস্তাকুরেও হলে মিল দিত পরে হোহার অর্থাৎ গীতিকা পরে নিরুত হন। এইরূপে কিছু দিন গুত করিয়া কত দিনে কত কবে স্বাক্ষর করিয়া দিতেন। তৎকালে হস্ত মকলকই গীত ও হস্ত প্রদান করিতেন। অতি অল্প দিবস পরেই তথ্যে বেণে স্বাক্ষর করিয়া হইয়া তৎকালে মিলিত গীত লইতে আরম্ভ করিল। পরেও প্রথম প্রথম আদিত হইয়া সঙ্গ হওয়াই সঙ্গ করিল। In the anthology of Bengal love-songs entitled *Pratigiti* (ed. Abināś Chandra Ghos) three or four songs are attributed to Bhabāni Bāṅik at pp. 611, 665, 809, 878-79. These songs however although sung by Bhabāni Bāṅik in his party are not of his own composition but have been attributed to Rām Basu or Haru Ṭhākura in all other collections or anthologies. (See *Prākṛa-Kāśa* *śaṅkara* pp. 18-20, 30, 60, 80). Of Bhabāni's own composition, nothing has survived.

composed music but on this point, it is not possible to make any definite statement Even Īśvai Gupta <sup>1</sup> says, উক্ত উভয় সহোদরবেব মধ্যে কোন ব্যক্তি গীত ও সুর বচনাখ নিপুণ ছিনেন তদ্বিধে আমবা কিছুই জানিতে পাবি নাই।

Rāsu and Nrsimha, though not of obscure origin like the greater number of their fellow-poets, yet afford no exception to the general rule in the obscurity that surrounds their lives Rāsu was born in 1734 (1141 B S) and Nrsimha in 1738 (1144 B S) at Gondalpādā near French Chandannagai of a good Kāyastha family <sup>2</sup> Their father, Ānandīnāth Rāy was a clerk in the military department of the French Government and earned a good deal besides his nominal salary The two boys were sent to the local village-school and then to their maternal uncle's house at Chinsurah where the missionaries had established a Bengali School (before May's school founded in 1814) They did not do much at school and so ultimately were sent back to their father after a year Ānandīnāth died soon after this, and thus left to themselves, the boys had freedom enough to live as they liked They attached themselves to the party of Raghunāth the Kabiwala who was the master of Hari Thākuri, but, having gained some knowledge of the art they formed a party of their own which soon became popular They were greatly patronised by Indranāīāyaṇ Chaudhuri, Dewan of the French Government, and Chandannagai soon became a centre of Kabi-song through their influence. Rāsu died at the good old age of seventy-two or seventy-three in 1807, Nrsimha survived him for a few years more

<sup>1</sup> *Sambād Prabhākari*, Māgh 1261, quoted in *Janma bhūmī*, 1302, p 227

<sup>2</sup> These biographical details are taken from *Sambād Prabhākari*, loc cit, *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p 645 et seq, *Kabiyālādiger Gīt*, pp 97-98, *Janma bhūmī* loc cit etc

Of Rāsū and Nṛsiṅha's composition, only six songs have come down to us and the number is obviously too small<sup>1</sup>

Their songs on *sakhi*  
*sambād* and *biraha*

and the songs themselves too inadequate to allow us to form a just estimate of their powers. These

songs all relate to *sakhi-sambād* and *biraha* but we are not sure whether they composed songs on other themes. Tradition says that these were the two themes in which Rāsū and Nṛsiṅha excelled and the extant songs in spite of their small bulk certainly corroborate this tradition. Here is one of the much praised pieces on *sakhi sambād*, which in spite of its fanciful note, is not wholly destitute of merit.

প্রাণনাথো বোরো লেখেছেন শব্দরো

বেশনিবে প্রিয়ে ললিতে ।

অশব্দরো ধব্দরো আছু প্রভাতে ।

বুঝি কারো কাছে রজনী লেগেছে

নয়ন লেগেছে চুলিতে ॥

পার্কীতীনাথেরো অর্ধ শব্দরো

ললিতা অর্ধ কপালেতে ।

অনাথো নাগরো লেখেছেন ধব্দরো

চন্দন লিঙ্গর ভালেতে ॥

হায় ! মথনরো বিবো ভবিবে মথনো

নীল কণ্ঠসেবে নিশানা ।

নীলকণ্ঠ নাম অতি অশ্লীল

অগতে রয়েছে ঘোষণা ॥

Only six poems in all is to be found in all the existing books of collection and all these songs are noteworthy

আমাব নাগরো গিয়েছিলে কবো

কলক-সাগরো মথিতে ।

খুবায়ে মথনো এনেছেন নিশানো

আখির অঙ্গন গলেতে ॥

It will be noticed that in this poem as well as in other poems on the same theme, the characteristic feature lies in

its power of gentle bantei and soft  
Their characteristic quality sarcasm which, though not rare in

other Kabirwalas, was wielded with great effect by Rūsū and Nrsīṃha. In all these poems we have, on the one hand, the extreme simplicity of natural emotion befitting a *mugdā* heroine, on the other, there is a sense of pride and self-esteem, which imparts a touch of malicious egoism to these passionate songs Alluding to Kubjā, the Sakhī says

শ্যাম, রূপেবো বিচাবো যদি মনে কবো

মজেছ যাহাব কাবণে ।

ওহে লক্ষ কুব্জাবো রূপেবো ভাণ্ডাবো

শ্রীমতী বাধাবো চবণে ॥

শ্যাম, ত্যজিলে শ্রীমতী তাহাতে কি ক্ষতি

যুবতী সকলি সহিলো ।

ভুজঙ্গ-মাণিকো হোবে নিলো ভেকো

মবমে এ ছুথো বহিলো ॥

শ্যাম, প্রদীপেবো আলো প্রকাশ পাইলো

চন্দ্রমা লুকালো গগনে ।

ওহে গোখুবোব জনো জগতো ব্যাপিলো

সাগর শুকালো তপনে ॥

Or take another

শ্যাম, কার ভাবে ভুলে, কহ কোথা ছিলে

মোজেছিলে কাব প্রেমেতে ।

প্রভাতে কেমনে আইগে এ স্থানে  
 নিশাজ বদনো দেখাতে ॥  
 শ্যাম, শরমে কি করে বলিছে তোমায়ে  
 প্রেমতী রাখার কথাটি ।  
 এবারে মাথবে যে আনি দিগায়ে  
 সে বাবে রাখার মাথাটি ॥  
 দিবে পর ছুটি মাড়ায়ে বে মাটি  
 প্রেমতী তো সেটি হোয়ে না ।  
 তুলিয়ে সে মাটি দিবে ছড়া ঝাটি  
 প্রীরাখার এটি কটুকেনা ॥

In their *biraha* songs again, there is no effeminate indulgence of self pity or straining after racy perversity but they are simple, direct and dignified and have considerable restraint of thought and language. The poets ask

কহ সখি কিছু প্রেমেরি কথা ।  
 ঘুচাও আমার মনের ব্যথা ॥  
 করিলে প্রবণো হই দিখ্য জানো  
 হেন প্রেমবনো উপজে কোথা ॥  
 আমি মলিকেরো স্থানে পেরেছি সন্ধানো  
 কুমি নাকি জানো প্রেমবাঁধতা ।  
 আমি এগেছি বিবাগে মনের বিরাগে  
 প্রীতি-প্রয়াগে মুড়াব মাথা ॥

Speaking of the ordinary idea of love they say

সখি এ সকল প্রেম প্রেম নয় ।  
 ইহাতে মজিরে নাহি রথেরো উদয় ॥  
 অক্ষয় ভগ্ননো লোক গগ্ননো কলঙ্ক-ভাঙ্গনো হতে হয় ॥  
 অধির তেজের সরলে মোখে উপজে কি সুখো ।  
 কলঙ্ক ঘোষণা অগতে মরণো হতে অধিকো ॥

ভাজিয়ে এ সুধাবসো কেন বিধ ভণিরো, বসুদেব ভূমিন ।

পাকিতে নহনো অস যেই হনো, পোয় প্রেমদানা সে হাবান ॥

and the ways of such a lover are ironically reproached

তোমার চরিত, পদিক যেনও

হোয়ে প্রাপ্তিদূত বিশ্রান বনে ।

প্রাপ্তি দূর হলে, দায় সেই চোখে

পুন নাহি চাহ দিলে ॥

If one can judge from the exceedingly small mass of poems of Rāsu and Nṛsinha, which has been preserved but which is too inadequate to represent their talents in full, one would still hesitate to set aside these little things as mere melodious trifles or deny that their authors possessed a considerable share of the irresistible song-gift. Their love-songs may lack, as the love-songs of most of the Kabiwalas do, novelty, polish or depth, but they have a simple directness and an untutored nobility which is not common enough among contemporary songsters.

Haru Thākuri, however, the next great Kabiwala, displays a variety and abundance of poetical accomplishment,

and his work has fortunately come

Haru Thākuri 1738  
1812

down to us in a comparatively large

bulk Haru Kṛṣṇa Dīṅghādī or

Dīṅghāṅgī, popularly styled Haru Thākuri, the adjunct Thākuri having been added as a mark of respect, was a Brāhman among Kabiwalas of generally inferior caste. He was born at Simla, Calcutta, in 1738 (1145 B S).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Writing in 1854, Īśvarī Gupta says that Haru died at the age of 75, "more than forty years" before his own time. This would indicate that the dates of Haru's birth and death would be roughly 1739 and 1814 respectively.

His father, Kalyāṇachandra<sup>1</sup> Dirghāji sent his son to the *pāṭhśālā* of one Bhairab-chandra Sarkār but his means were not sufficient to give his son a good education nor did the son seem eager enough to profit by his studies, for from his early years Haru betrayed a greater attachment to musical and poetical composition than to monotonous book learning. When he was a mere boy eleven years old, his father died and Haru at once gave up his books and began an irregular life of indolent pleasure for some years. But he had a natural gift of song and his irregular life had brought him into contact with a group of bohemians whom he gathered together and formed an amateur Kabi party (*sakker dal*) under the acknowledged guidance of the weaver poet Raghunāth in whose company Haru had obtained his preliminary training. It is through Raghunāth that Haru first began to be widely known and appreciated and for Raghu Haru Thākur always cherished a deep feeling of respect and gratitude a fact which is amply indicated by his generously putting his master's *bhāṣṇā* to some of his own compositions. The story is told how Haru got fame and recognition for the first time by singing at the palace of Rājā Nabakṛṣṇa, a great patron of letters of that time and how the delighted Rājā having awarded him with a pair of shawls the proud young man felt insulted at being treated like a needy professional Kabirwala and walked away throwing the royal gift on the head of his own *dholi* (drummer). The Rājā however was a man of taste and discernment and had enough sense of humour to appreciate the uncommon behaviour of the young poet and it was through the Rājā's advice and patronage obtained so queerly that Haru subsequently formed a professional party (*peśūdārī dal*) although he

<sup>1</sup> Called Kalicharan in *Batgobhāṣar Lekhak*, vol. I 307; in *G. p. ratnoddhar* p. 10; in *Kabirajitādiger GU* p. 64



always seemed averse to earning money by such a prostitution of his talents. Henceforth Kabi-song became his profession and his fame spread far and wide. He died at the age of 74 in 1812<sup>1</sup>

It is to be regretted that neither the songs of Haru Thākuri nor that of his great rival Rām Basu have been collected or critically edited. Īśvarī Gupta gave us (1854) for the first time the largest collection of 45 songs of Haru Thākuri (though some of them are mere fragments)

on the themes of *sakhī-sambād* and *biraha*. The *Kabirajālādiger Gīt Samgraha* (1862) merely reproduces

27 of these with the single addition of new piece<sup>2</sup>. The *Gupta-ratnoddhār* (1894) again, the other anthology of Kabi-songs, gives us only 30 pieces all taken from Īśvarī Gupta's collections. In *Prāchīn Kabi-samgraha* (1877), the number of Haru Thākuri's songs is very limited, only 13 being given under his name, but of these 13 songs, five or six at least have been unanimously attributed in other collections to Rām Basu and one, so attributed to Basu and Nisimha,<sup>3</sup> is rightly or wrongly placed under Haru Thākuri's name. In *Prītigītā*, the most extensive modern anthology of Bengali love-poems, there are 30 songs attributed to Haru Thākuri but all of them (except two<sup>4</sup> which are apparently new but which are however mere fragments and do not add much to Haru's reputation)

<sup>1</sup> *Nabyabhārat*, 1311, p. 605. But, according to *Kabirajālādiger Gīt*, p. 66 and *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patricā*, 1302, p. 384, following Īśvarī Gupta (*Prabhākar*, Pous, 1261) at the age of 75.

<sup>2</sup> At p. 134. But it is sometimes attributed to Rām Basu.

<sup>3</sup> At p. 87-79.

<sup>4</sup> At p. 119 and p. 397.

are to be found in other collections and one of these<sup>1</sup> is universally attributed in other collections to Rām Baṇī and one which is Haru's is wrongly attributed to Bhabānī Banik.<sup>2</sup> Again much uncertainty still remains in spite of these efforts, as to the question of authorship of many of these songs for there is absolutely no means for determining with absolute certainty the authorship of many a song variously attributed to various poets. What is true of Haru Thākur is true of every other Kabiwala, and this one instance would sufficiently illustrate the nature and extent of the data one has got to handle in dealing with Kabi poetry.

But a poor collection of 45 songs—all of them not of the best and some of them mere fragments—is but a sadly diminished and dwindled legacy of the extraordinary reputation which Haru Thākur has always enjoyed as one of the greatest of the Kabiwalas.

**His versatility** The songs which have come down to us mostly relate to either of the

two themes of *biraha* and *sikkī-sambād* but if we are to rely upon the testimony of Išvar Gupta who wrote only forty years after Haru Thākur's death we must admit that the great Kabiwala could write with equal facility and power upon all the other recognised themes such as *āgamani*, *lhalāni*, *birayak*, *lakar* and

**His *lakar* and *khenq* songs** *testimony of Išvar Gupta.* *khenq* On the first two of these divisions not a single composition of Haru has survived. Išvar Gupta again tells us that Haru could compose best on the themes of

At p 808.

At p 613 The *Saṅgīti sār-saṅgraha* and *Bhāṅgīlīr Gā* etc. give a selection of Kabi-songs; but they are later and inferior collections apparently reproducing what is given in other special collections and therefore are not mentioned here.

*lahar*<sup>1</sup> and *kheud*, but these songs, although much praised in their time for their ingenuity and verbal music, were hopelessly vitiated by bad taste and unredeemed coarseness and can be dismissed with the just though severe comments of Īśvar Gupta himself which deserves quotation here, কিন্তু ছুঃখের বিষয় এই যে অতি জঘন্য অতি ঘৃণিত অতি অশ্রাব্য অবাচ্য শব্দে পূর্বিত হইত, একাবণ তাহুকোন প্রকাবেই প্রকাশ কবা বিধেয় নহে। যখন তাহার নাম কবিত্তে হইলেই বায় বলিয়া ঘাম নির্গত কবিত্তে হয়, ভূত প্রেত প্রভৃতি কর্ণে হস্ত দিয়া কোথায় প্রস্থান কবে, তখন আমবা কি প্রকাবে তাহা পত্র কবিত্তে পাবি। পূর্বকাবে ভ্রুতি প্রধান ২ নহিমান্বিত অর্থাৎ মহাবাজ স্বষ্টিচন্দ্র রায় বাহাদুর, নবস্বষ্টি বাহাদুর প্রভৃতি উচ্চ লোকেবা এবশুত অশুত সকাবে বকাবে সন্তুষ্ট হইতেন, আনোদেব পরিসীমা থাকিত না। জাতি, কুটুম্ব, মজন, মজন, পবিজনে পবিবেষ্টিত হইয়া গদগদচিত্তে শ্রবণ করিতেন।<sup>2</sup> It is no wonder, therefore, that these songs have all perished, and time, the exorable judge and destroyer, has preserved to us only those songs on *brah̄a* and *sakh̄i-sambād* for

<sup>1</sup> If *Kheud* is unquotable, *lahar* is nearly so. As the modern reader has no idea of what it is like we give here a specimen of a moderate type—

আমি মগধপতি জয়সধা বটি হে কংসেরি শশুর।  
ওহে কংসের ভাগ্নে কৃষ্ণ তুমি নাতি আমার সখা মধুর॥  
তোনার সখী দুটি পবিপাটি নামে ভীমার্জুন,  
কৃষ্ণ ভাল কবে আজ আমারে দাও উহাদের পরিচয়।  
উহার কোন্টি তোমার পিসুতো ভাই, কোন্টি ভগ্নিপতি হয়॥  
ভদ্রবরেন্দ্র মেয়ে বটে সুভদ্রাব বুদ্ধি ভাল নয়,  
ওহে ভাইকে পতি করতে গেলে তোমার মত কে আব হয়?

It hardly requires any comment. This and *Kheud* represents a phase of the Kabi-movement over which the critic had better keep silence.

<sup>2</sup> *Sambād Prabhākar*, Pous, 1, 1261, pp 5 6

which Hari Thākur had been deservedly famous and which indicate even in the fragmentary and inadequate specimens which have come down considerable poetic power, which cannot be, as it often is summarily damned.

Leaving aside the uncritical encomiums of reactionary enthusiasts, on the one hand and undue undervaluing by an equally enthusiastic school of 'modern critics' on the other we must admit that even the obviously inadequate and insufficient specimen of Hari Thākur's workmanship which have survived indicate that he had, even

His poetic quality judged by strict standard sufficient intelligence and poetic power in larger or smaller in clearer or more clouded shape of writing songs and not mere congeries of verses. Considering the time and the circumstances this must not be regarded as a very poor or mean praise. That there are obvious and not inconsiderable defects is true. The subject is often trite the thought a hackneyed or insignificant one the poet lacks perfect expression and sustained utterance is defective in rhyme or metre or other technical qualities and has one of the superior charm and grace of the greatest Baisnab poets. But the indefinable yet unmistakable poetic touch is always there and nothing but superficial or wilfully capricious criticism will pooh pooh its true poetic spirit or damn it with faint praise.

It is not possible within the limits of our plan to enter into details or with the space at our disposal, to give extensive quotations which alone would bring out the beauty of Hari Thākur's songs. But these songs are more or less justly included in the numerous anthologies of Bengali poetry and many of them are known by heart to every one who knows Bengali poetry at all. The best songs of Hari Thākur

His songs on *sāhi*  
*ambālat*

the merit of which it is impossible to understate, more than justify themselves to any one who looks at poetry with just and catholic appreciation. To such a reader, মইবে, কই বিপিনবিচাৰী বিনোদ 'আনাব এনা' is not a trifle nor কদম্বতলে বেগো বংশী বাজায় nor সখিব বনেব অগমে গত দিবসেবো বজনীশেষে nor 'আনাবে সখি দবো নবো ব্যথাব ব্যথিত হে আছে আনাবো nor আগে যদি প্রাণসখি জানিতান nor কি কাহ আৰ এভংগনে nor many others. We have not space enough for lengthy quotations but we shall select here two specimens (other than those mentioned) from his *sakhī-sambād* <sup>2</sup>

শ্যাম তিলেক দাঁড়াও

হেবি চিকণ বাণ নবণ । শ্যাম তিলেব দাঁড়াও ।

এ অধিনীব নলেব নানন পুৰাও ॥

সাধ মন বহুদিনেব, আঁচ পেয়েছি অঙ্গনে

চন্দ্রাননে হাসি হানি বাঁশিটি বাজাও ॥

নির্জনে এমন না পাব দবশন

বাঁশ নিশি যাক্ জাতক শুভজন ।

তাহাতে নহি খেদিতো শুন ওহে এজনাতো

ও বংশীবো শুন কত বিশেষে শুনাও ॥

শ্যাম, শুন শুন যাও কেন বাথহে বচন ।

তোমাব বাঁশিব গান আমি কবিব শ্রবণ ॥

কোন বন্ধে পুবে ধনি কুলবতীব মন

কুল সহিতে হে কবিলে হবণ ।

কোন বন্ধে পুবে ধনি বাধায় কব উদাসিনী

সাপাতে বাজাও শুনি আমাব মাথা খাও ॥

<sup>1</sup> Contains Haru Thākura's master's (Raghu's) *bhanitā* hence quoted as Raghu's in *Banga Sāhitya Parichay*, vol II, pp 1548-49

<sup>2</sup> *Sambād Prabhākar*, Pous, 1261, *Kabirāyālādiger Gīt*, p 88, *Gupta ratnoddhār*, p 60, *Sangit-sār saṅgraha*, p 1038, also quoted in *Nabyabhārat*, 1131, p 602

The other is a fine piece but it is sometimes attributed to Rām Bāru<sup>1</sup>

একি অকমাৎ যজ্ঞে বজ্রাঘাত কে আনিলো রথ মোকুলে ।

অকুর সহিতে কেন কুমি রথে, বুঝি মধুমাতে চলিলে ॥

ইহাই কি তোমারি মনে ছিল হরি এলকুলনারী বহিলে ।

বলনা কি বাহ সাধিলে ॥

শ্যাম ভেবে দেখ মনে তোমারি কারণে এজাদনাগর উদাসী

নাহি অস্ত্র ভাবো স্তন হে মাধবো তোমারি প্রেমের প্রয়ানী ॥

শ্যাম, নিশাভাগ নিশি বধা বাজে বাশি তথা আসি গোপী নকলে ।

কিলে হলেম দোষী তা তোমারি দ্বিজানী এই দোষে কিহে ত্যজিলে ॥

যদি চলিলে মুরারি ত্যজে এলগুরী এলনারী কোথা রেখে যাও ।

ঐবন উপার বলে লাও ॥

হে মধুধন করি নিবেদন যদন তুলিরে কথা কও ॥

শ্যাম যাও মধুগুরী নিবেদ না করি থাক হরি বধা মুখ পাও ।

একবার সহাত্রবদনে বহ্নিনয়নে এলমোপীস পানে কিরে চাও ॥

জনমের মত শ্রীচরণ চুটি হেরি হে নয়নে শ্রীহরি

আর হেরিব না আশা করি ।

Haru Thākura is certainly at his best in these songs on *sakhi-sambād* and one who does not incur the mishap of falling between the two schools already alluded to will appreciate their charming quality. His *biraka* songs which at one time enjoyed and even to-day enjoys an enormous reputation and popularity are certainly inferior in quality as well as in bulk not only to his *sakhi-sambād* compositions but also to the *biraka* songs of his rival and

<sup>1</sup> So attributed in *Nabysākhārat*, 1311 p. 478 and *Jamshākhārat* 1303-04 p. 303; but in all other collections from Īśvar Gupta downwards, it is assigned to Haru Thākura. There are slight differences of reading in various collections. In some anthologies the lines beginning with যদি চলিলে মুরারি are taken as constituting a separate song.

contemporary Rām Basu. These songs do not call for detailed comment though some of them are not altogether destitute of merit. There is no peculiar charm or characteristic feature which distinguishes these songs from similar compositions of other Kabiwalas except perhaps the fact that there is a sense of disappointment,<sup>1</sup> of embittered feeling,<sup>2</sup> of sarcastic gloominess<sup>3</sup> in tone and temper. We will therefore close this account with one short piece which, if not characteristically representative, will illustrate sufficiently Haim Thākuri's style and manner.

পীবিতি নাহি গোপনে থাকে ।  
 শুনলো স্বজনি বলি তোনাকে ॥  
 শুনেছ কখনো জগত আশুগো  
 বসনে বন্ধনো বাথে ॥  
 প্রতিপদেব চাঁদো হবিষে বিবাদো  
 নয়নে না দেখে উদয় লেখে ।  
 দ্বিতীয়ের চাঁদো কিঞ্চিতো প্রকাশো  
 তৃতীয়েব চাঁদো জগতে দেখে ॥

Nityānanda-dās Bairāgī, popularly called Nitāi or Nite Bairāgī, younger than Haim Thākuri but much older than Rām Basu, was one of the famous and popular Kabiwalas of his time, but his fame rested more upon his sweet and melodious singing than upon his poetical

Nitāi Bairāgī  
 1751-1821

<sup>1</sup> See for instance the song 'এতো দুখো অপমানো মাধেবো পীবিতে প্রাণো' or 'ধিক্ ধিক্ তার জীবন যৌবন' (already quoted under Raghunāth) or 'তোমার আশাতে এ চারিজন নোব মনো প্রাণো অবণো নয়না।'

<sup>2</sup> See for instance 'আর নাবীরে কবোনা প্রত্যয়' (sometimes attributed to Rām Basu), 'যার স্বভাব যা থাকে প্রাণনাথ তা কি ঘুচাতে কেহ পাবে' or 'বুকেছি মনেতে রমণীর প্রেম।'

<sup>3</sup> See for instance 'ওহে বাব বাব আর কেন জ্বালাও আমায়। or এই সদা ভয় মনেতে বিচ্ছেদো বা খটে পীরিতে।'

composition. He was an expert singer rather than a good composer of words. Himself an unlettered man he could hardly weave words into music; but one Gour Kabirāj a native of Simla Calcutta and a brāhman named Nabai Thākur used to frame songs for him by which he won so much reputation. Gour Kabirāj<sup>1</sup> excelled in *lirakī* and *khenī* while Nabai Thākur had more versatile gift although he is credited with great excellence in his *sikhi varṇanā*. It is difficult however to ascertain at this day what particular song was composed by this or that individual poet and even half a century ago Isvar Gupta no mean judge who collected these songs only 33 years after Nītāi's death and had ampler materials than we now possess confessed his inability to do so.<sup>2</sup> All songs, therefore which were sung by his party now go by his name alone.

Nītāi was born at Chandan nagar about 1751 (1108 BS)<sup>3</sup> in the house of one Kuṣṇajadāy Baimnab and was brought up in Baimnabism. Nothing however is known about the detail of his life but his fame as a kabīwala at one time spread far and wide over the prosperous cities and villages on the two sides of the Hooghly and we read graphic accounts of the eagerness with which people used to come from a great distance to witness the sensational kabī fights between Nītāi and Bhabāni Bayik once his great rival.<sup>4</sup>

This Kabirāj also used to compose songs for other parties. Lakṣmīnārāyaṇ Jogi (Loko Jugī) and Nīlu Thākur were among those whom he thus favoured. It has been already noted that one song which is often attributed to Nītāi bears the *bhāṣā* of Rāmji. This may indicate, if the song itself is not Rāmji's that the latter was one of the poetical preceptors of Nītāi.

In *Prakāś Kabī-saṅgraha*, however two songs are given with direct attribution to Nabai Thākur.

See *Saṁbād Prabhākar Aṅgrahāyaṇ* 1 1201

*Ibid*, loc. cit



But his profession not only brought him fame, it also brought him money, and we are told that he made good use of his fortune by spending it in erecting an *Āḷḷā* at Chinsurah and a temple at Chandan-nagar where all the great religious festivals were held with pomp and splendour. In 1821,<sup>1</sup> while returning from the house of the Rājā of Kasimbazar where he had gone to sing during the Pūjā festival, he was attacked by illness which proved fatal and he died in the same year at the great age of seventy. He had three sons Jagatchandria, Rāmchandria and Premchandria each of whom inherited his father's profession, if not his talents, and formed Kabi-parties in later times, but no direct descendant of Nītāi is alive to-day.

Like Haim Phākuri whom Nītāi resembles so much in poetical character, Nītāi possessed not a small share of the gift of exquisite song-writing. He wrote chiefly on *sakhī sambād* and *biṇaha* but in both these he shows considerable power. We have already quoted one of his beautiful songs in which there is, if not the delicacy of artificial bloom and perfection, a strain of the real, the ineffable tone of poetry proper. Nītāi had none of Rām Basu's rhetorical tendency, finical nicety or straining after studied effects, but his songs possess not a little amount of unconscious freshness and beauty of tender sentiment and expression. Nītāi however, like most of his compeers, is a very unequal poet, spasmodic bursts of fine lines and couplets go hand in hand with insipid and hardly tolerable verses. Himself a Baisnab Banāgī he, among the Kabiwalas, could more successfully imitate the inimitable Baisnab lyrics but the imitation often involves a peculiar lack of judgment which makes him reproduce the heresies rather than the virtues of earlier poets. It is not necessary to give too many

<sup>1</sup> 1813 according to *Kabirajyālādiger Gīt*, p. 110

quotations but the following selected extracts as well as that given on p 330 would illustrate his merits and defects.<sup>1</sup>

গমন গময়েতে কেঁদে গেল সুসারি ।  
 তাই ভাবি দিবা শরীরী ॥  
 জনমেদো মত সাধারে কাদাণে  
 বৃষ্টি, ত্রজে আনিবেনা গ্রীহরি ॥  
 হরি কি আসিবে ত্রজে আর মনে গনেছ করি ।  
 যদি মধুপুরী হেসে যেতো হরি পুন আসিতো বংশিদারী ॥  
 হার, চটি করে যদি বধনো আদার বাট বাই বধু কর ।  
 তখনো ভ্রামেদো কমলবদনো নরনের অলে ভেসে যার ॥

Nitā's *biraka* songs again which however are rather scantily handed down are not altogether negligible although they have none of the superior merit of Rām Bān's *biraka*. We select here two specimens

অেরসি তোমার অেরবার  
 আমি শুধিলে কি তাহা শুধিতে পারি ।  
 তুমি যে বনো খাতকে দিগেছ কমলো  
 পরিশোধে তাহা পরালে মরি ॥  
 মনো বাধা রেখে তোমারো স্থানে  
 গইলাম অের কমলো করি ।  
 সে ধারো উদ্ধারো হইবে কেমনে  
 লাভে মূলে হল বিগুণ তারি ॥<sup>2</sup>

পীরিতি নগরে বিবনো সখি মনো চোরেদো ভয় ।  
 বলতি ইহাতে হার ॥  
 নরনে নরনে গছানো মন অমনি হরিদে লয় ॥<sup>3</sup>

*Rambhād Prabhākar Agrahāṇya* 1261 p 10.

*Ibid* p. 9. *Gupta ratnoddhā* p. 128-9; *K biogrādiger GIt* p 122.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid* loc. cit.; *ibid*, p 127; *ibid*, p 121

Latest born of this group but intimately connected with Haim Thākui in poetical rivalry, in superior reputation and also in the singularly unsympathetic criticism which has been lavished from time to time upon him, is Rām Basu. He was considerably younger than Haim and Nitāi—almost by forty-eight and thirty-five years respectively—having been born about 1786, but he survived Nitāi by seven years and died off a year before Haim Thākui. His full name was Rām-mohan Basu but he was widely and popularly known through the abbreviated form of his name,

Rām Basu 1786  
1828

His birth-place was Sālkiā on the right bank of the Hooghly and his father's name was Rām Lochan Basu. Like every village-boy he was at first educated at the village *pāth-shālā* and then at the age of twelve he was sent to Calcutta to his uncle's (father's sister's husband) house at Jorasanko for further education. But like Haim Thākui, Rām Basu showed even in his early years a marked tendency towards poetical composition which made his ambitious father sorry but which brought the young poet to the notice of the kabiwala Bhabānī Banik. Bhabānī's training and encouragement made Rām Basu realise very early the true bent of his genius. His father dying soon after this, Rām Basu had to give up his studies and became a clerk in some mercantile office. But his poetical aptitudes proving too strong, he ultimately took up the profession of a Kabiwala—a lucrative profession, however, in those days as a regular means of livelihood. At first he continued to compose songs and sing for Bhabānī, later on for Nilu Thākui, Thākui-dās Simha and others, but in the end, a few years before his death, he formed a party of his own, at first amateur eventually professional.

Of his character nothing definite is known but Rām Basu seems to have been one of those poets who have

relished this life heartily while heartily believing in another

His temper and character at once religious and sensual  
He was not a man of ascetic or inelastic temper nor had he taken upon himself the mere materialism or the satiated attitude of latter-day poets

but he had enough simplicity and integrity of feeling which made him grateful for the joys of life but repentant when he had exceeded in enjoying them Tradition speaks of his partiality for one Jajñeśvarī<sup>1</sup> a songstress of Nīlu Thākura's party who was herself a gifted Kabiwala of some reputation in her time But though he was himself not above reproach he would still satirise with considerable frankness and sincerity the reckless young men of his time.<sup>2</sup> Indeed Rām Basu's poems express in the most vivid and distinct manner, the alternate or rather varying moods of a man of soft sensibilities religious as well as sensual

Rām Basu's poems which however have not come down in a more complete or more abundant form than

Three groups of his poems.  
Haru Thākura divide themselves in three groups *sakhi-santibad biraka* and *āgamantī*

In all these three departments of Kabi poetry he is said to have excelled but the poems which have survived in each department do not display an equal degree of merit His songs on *sakhi-santibad* although placed by popular opinion in the same rank with Haru Thākura's exquisite things in the same line are certainly much inferior not only to those of his rival Haru but also, it seems to those of Nīlāi Bairagi Although

Of Jajñeśvarī no details are known; one or two of her songs have survived which are noticeable They will be found in *Bāga Bāhīya Parichaya* vol. II; also in other anthologies.

বরের বন ফেলে গ্রাণ পরের বনকে আঁসুলে বেঁধেও ।

বাহি আন বর বাসা কি বসন্ত কি বসন্ত

এতকে করে নিখালা অন্যের আশা পূরেও ।

there are some fine pieces which one should not capriciously ignore,<sup>1</sup> his songs on *sakhī-sambād* are marked by an artificiality of tone, by a considerable display of cheap ingenuity and sometimes by a vulgarity of tone and sentiment which very often mars his beautiful passages. We have quoted already one song of this type while illustrating the feebleness and inadequacy of Kabi-songs in reproducing the spirit and grace of earlier poetry. Rām Bāsu is often regarded as the greatest poet of this group but he is at the same time the most unequal poet. Indeed the songs of Rām Basu, in spite of their charm and appeal, illustrate very aptly the utmost capacity as well as the utmost limitation of Kabi-poetry in all its aspects. The merits and defects of these songs are alike very great. As on the one hand, we have, in some of them, considerable simplicity of style, directness of expression, vigorous use of the vernacular idiom, tenderness and human interest, so on the other, we have the almost cloying display of verbal or alliterative dexterity, the conscious elaboration of trivial themes or taste sentiment, the comparatively uninspired use of ornaments and conceits the bane of a long-standing literary tradition and a false and affected taste for the jingle of weakly and inharmonious phrases. Coming, as it does, at the end of this flourishing period of Kabi-poetry, Rām Basu's song at once represents the maturity as well as the decline of that species.

Taking in the first instance, his songs on *sakhī-sambād* in which we find all these merits and defects amply set forth. We cannot but admit their inferiority in tone, sentiment and expression as seen in lines like the following

<sup>1</sup> See for instance his song মান কবে মান বাখতে পাবিনে or বনপুত্রে অশ্বপুত্র সখি etc,

কর্তে রাখায় মান রক্ষে উত্তর পক্ষে বেন মান হয় ।

করে এ পক্ষে পক্ষপাত যে পক্ষে থাকে রাখানাথ

আনি প্রেমপক্ষে প্যাম আমার বিপক্ষে নয় ॥

is a good specimen of verbal dexterity but it lacks in poetic illumination. Then again note the raw, yet inferior note of the following —

শ্রীরাধায় বনে পরিহরি কোথা হে হরি ।

গুণানে কি প্রাণ হরি ও প্রাণহরি ।

এনে বনে ফুল হরি, কে জানে বধিবে হরি

হরি ভয় কি মনে করি মরি বোলে হরি হরি ॥

or take even the following artificial and hardly inspiring lines at one time highly extolled as one of the best pieces of Rām Basu !

অলে কি অলে কি বোনে সেথ গ্যা সখি কি হেলে হিলোনেতে ।

পারিনে স্থির নির্ণয় করিতে ।

ভানলো কমলো ফুটেছে বুঝি নির্ভলো বমুনো অনেতে ॥

নিতি নিতি লই এষ্ট বমুনায় অল সখি

অল মধ্যে কি আয় একি সেথ বেশি ॥

অলে কি এমনো দেখেছ কখনো বল বেশি ভগ্যা ললিতে ॥

সই বেশ বেশি নোভা কিনেয় আসা হেরি অলো মাঝেতে ।

এ-ফুটিত ভানলো বৃক্ষ বারো কানো ঐ ছায়া কি ইথে ॥

আরো সখি কালা চাঁদ কি আছে ।

গগন মণ্ডলে কি পাতালে রয়েছে ॥

বল বেশি সখি কালাচাঁদ কি উদয় হয় দিবসেতে ॥

In his *sakhī-sambād* if Rām Basu is not fantastic to frigidty, he is often insipid to dullness. If he does not disgust, he too often tires. It is very seldom that Rām

This song is generally given as Rām Basu's, but see *Bachya Sakhīya Parichay* vol. II, p. 1152, where it is placed under Haru Thākur's name.

Basu bursts forth into comparatively fine lines like the following

ওগো চিনেছি চিনেছি চরণ দেখে  
 ঐ বটে সেট কালিনে ।  
 চরণে চাঁদ ছাঁদ আছে দীপ্ত হয়ে ।  
 সে চরণ ভরে ব্রহ্মেতে আনাম  
 ডাকে বনদিনী নোলিসে ॥  
 ভুবনমোহন না দেখি এমন  
 ঐ বট ।  
 রূপ কি অপরূপ বসকুপ  
 ' আনবি মই ।  
 কুলে শীলে কালি দিয়েছি আমি  
 কাল রূপ নগ্ননে হেঁবিণে ॥

The above remarks equally apply to his *braha* songs—  
 His songs on *braha* Listen to this fantastic and long-  
 drawn-out complaint of a languishing  
 maiden

এ বসন্তে সখি পঞ্চ আনাব কাল হনো জগতে ।  
 কবে পঞ্চ ছুথে দাহ পঞ্চভূত দেহ পঞ্চত্ব বুঝি পাই পঞ্চবাণেতে ॥  
 পঞ্চ বাতনা প্রায় নিশি পঞ্চ গ্রহবেতে ।  
 যদি পঞ্চামৃত কবি পান নাহি জুড়ায় প্রাণ হৃদয়ে বেবে পঞ্চবাণ ।  
 দেখ পঞ্চানন তব তব কবেছিলেন বাব  
 এখন সেই দেহ দেহ পঞ্চশবেতে ॥  
 পঞ্চাশব মকবধবজ বিবহি বাজ্যে বাজন  
 মই মংচর পঞ্চশব বিপু হলো ভ্রমব কোকিলাদি পঞ্চজন ॥  
 বাজা পঞ্চশব অঙ্গে হানে পঞ্চশব  
 তাহে-উনপঞ্চাশত মলয় মারাত মই  
 আবাব ভান্ন দেহে তল্ল পঞ্চযোগেতে ॥

সই এহ প্রকাশিলে পক্ষম মঙ্গল ফলপ্রাপ বেন পক্ষবাণ ।  
 পক্ষলগ দিনে হাস বৃদ্ধি যায় তার কিরণেও দহে প্রাণ ॥  
 পক্ষম দ্বিগুণ বদন যায় সাক্ষসের বে প্রধান  
 তার চিত্তা সব অলছে সাথ পক্ষম হুণ্ডেও প্রাণ ॥  
 যদি বিপক্ষ দিকেতে চাই পক্ষদ্বিগু পাই পক্ষ সহকারী নাই ।  
 কেবল পক্ষম অনাবো পক্ষ ত্রিগুণ যথো  
 আমি থাকি বেন সখি পক্ষ ভগ্নেও ॥  
 সই পক্ষপাতুবেরা ষাণ্ডবকানন আলারে ছিল যেমন ।  
 তেমনি এ দেহ আলার সখি বসন্তের চর পক্ষজন ॥  
 পক্ষম দ্বিগুণ দ্বিগুণ করে করিতে চাহি ভক্ষণ ।  
 তাহে প্রতিবাদী হরগো আদি প্রতিবাদি পক্ষজন ॥  
 বলে পক্ষ ত্রিগুণ সিরেছে প্রাণে গরেছে এ পক্ষ কদিন আছে  
 কিন্তু এ পক্ষ বাতনা প্রাণে আর সছেন  
 সই এবার পক্ষ দিশার ব্রি পক্ষ ভগ্নেও ॥

It is impossible to mistake the significance of these lines and their tendency to artificiality. Super-subtleties of ingenuity are more and more preferred to genuine poetic imagination and the true and spontaneous accents of poetry are lost.

Indeed this tendency towards an artificial rhetorical style, this weakness for frigid conceits and for studied effects are very marked throughout the songs of Rām Basu and debase not a little the true quality of his work. There is a good deal of genuine passion and emotion in his songs but the artificial expression so often given to them makes them lose their proper appeal. The tricks of the artist are more apparent than the passion of the poet. They administer an exciting pleasure to the eye and the ear but they seldom touch or transport. The

Leaning towards rhetoric and artificiality



*biraha* of Rūm Basu is not the *biraha* of the with its exquisite passion and poignancy, no *biraha* of modern poets with its delicacy and It is too much of a verbal contest, of a frivolous and cious linguistic *classe* of the *pragalbhā* heroine. The of sarcasm is undoubted but fierce banter, — a mentalism or piercing irony forms its essence; and is too much of “bite,” of *ak* and *alar* of ostentatious distress to be at all touching, as in the following<sup>1</sup>:

যাঁ হোক ভাল ভালবাসিলে ।

খেয়ে আমার মাথা পবের কথায় পীরিং ভেঙ্গে পাখীসে ॥

করে আমাব উপর বাগ বাথলে যাব মোহাগ

এখন তাব আদবে তোমাব আদব বাড়িল ॥

তোনার পীবিতি কি বীতি হোল হে যেমন হংসী খুবিকেরি এা ॥

হংসী প্রেমেব দায় পাখী দিয়ে ঢাকে তায় সে পক্ষ কেটে নাগা ॥..

তোমার অন্তবে নাই একটু টান্।

বল ভালবাসি সেটা কেবল দেঁতোব হাসি হাস প্রাণ ॥

আমাব যা হবাব হলো প্রাণ ভাল দায়ে পড়েছে ।

বাহুগ্রস্ত শশী যেমন তেমনি হয়েছে ।

সন্ধিযোগে সে শশির স্থিতি দণ্ড নয় ।

সন্ধ্যা হোলে তোমাব প্রাণ নিত্য গ্রহণ হয় ।

সাবানিশি সৰ্বগ্রাসী দিনে চাঁদ মুখ বাহিবস ॥

আজি বিরহবাসবে নাথেবে ভেবে অন্তবে শব্দখ্যার করিরা দিম ।

সংগ্রামে পাণ্ডবেব হাতে ভীষ্মদেবেব দা যেমন ॥

<sup>1</sup> All these specimens are taken from *Sambād Prabhākar*. If they are reproduced in *Sangīt* etc., vol II.

আমার পতিরে বোলো দেশের ভূপতি বসন্ত ।  
 যদি সে রৈল দেশান্তর কে দিবে আমার কর  
 হবে কি কোকিল-সবে প্রাণান্ত ॥  
 সেত জানেনা যত্ন বসন্ত কেমন হরন্ত ।  
 আছে সে কর বলে সে কর ।  
 বলি সর ওরে পঞ্চশর আমাদের ঘরেতে নাই ঘর ॥  
 মদন যে করে কপের ওরে এমন আর কে করে  
 ওরে সাথে কি কোরেছে দিব শাপান্ত ॥  
 ভার্য্যে রেখে মদন রাজ্যে, সেই কান্ত গেল দেশান্তর  
 গমনি দিবা রজনী-বিগছে ঘছে কলংগর ॥  
 আমার যেমন কপাল গোড়া  
 তেমনি সেই হরকোলে ঐ অনন্তের সর্দার গোড়া  
 মদন সেই গোড়ার ভয়েতে পুরুষকে ঘরেনা সট  
 এসে কামিনীর কাছে হোণো কৃতান্ত ॥  
 আমি সাথে কি বিবাদে রয়েছি ।  
 কোরে না বুঝে লোভ শেষ পেরে কোভ  
 বলি কাকে চোখে দেখে ঠেকেছি ।  
 যেমন মৎস্যমাংসভোগী হরেছিল অধুকা  
 তুই কি আমার ভাগ্যে এখন সেইটে ঘটালি ।  
 তোরে ভাগবেসেছিলাম বোলে কিমে প্রাণ আমার চকুল মদালি ॥  
 আমার প্রাণনাথের এভাবে ভাল নয় কুটিল রুমর যেন বিষধর ।  
 নিজ রসভাগে মগ্নে এসে যদি সেই জলে মর্ক নিরন্তর ॥

There is also sometimes a tendency to elaborate didactic or symbolical form of expression<sup>1</sup>

Prīṭigīḥ pp. 74-75    *Saṅgītī sār saṅgītraṇa* vol. II, p. 1010.  
 This didactic tendency the Kabīwalas probably got from the writers  
 of the devotional songs, who from Rāmaprasād downwards often

প্রেম তবতে সখি চাবটি ফল ফলে ।  
 স্তন ফলেব নাম সুখ সৌখ্য মোক্ষ কাম  
 স্নজনেব স্ন কলঙ্ক কঠিনেব কপালে ॥  
 গোড়া কেটে মবে কেউ আগায় জল ঢেলে,  
 চিনে মূল যে দিতে পাবে জল  
 ঘটে তাব ভাগ্যেতে প্রেমতব্ব হাতে হাতে ফল ॥  
 তব মনেব বাগে বুড়িয়ে যায়  
 বিচ্ছেদ ছাগে মুড়িয়ে থায়  
 দেখো দেখো বন্ধে বেথো, ফলবে না মূল শুকালে ॥  
 প্রেমবৃক্ষে দিগে আশানীব কবতেছ সিঞ্চন  
 দেখ লো খেন হয় না শেষে বৃথা জাকিঞ্চন ।  
 বেড়া দাও মই প্রবৃত্তি কণ্টকে  
 প্রেমঅকুবে আঘাত কবে এমনি পোড়া লোকে ।  
 যদি থাকে ফলেব বাসনা বেশি জল দিগে জালিও না  
 সময়ে একবিন্দু দিনে সুখসিন্ধু উথলে ॥

It is not necessary to multiply quotations which have already become too lengthy but these aspects of Rām Basu's songs (in particular his *biraha* songs) have been so often ignored that critics have gone to the length of declaring that the songs in question, smart and ingenious though they are, are the most beautiful specimens of Kabir-song. Beautiful specimens Rām Basu's *biraha* songs are but they are such only when Rām Basu rises above these fatal faults and depends upon the strength of his natural

indulged in this vein Rām Basu very dexterously makes use of colloquial idiom, even of slang, but he sometimes carries the tendency to the extreme, e.g., 'অস্থি ভাজা ভাজা হলো প্রেমের দায়'। 'পিরীতি গেছে পাপ গেছে। হযে পবের পদানত চমকব জলে নিত্য খেত, যা হক বেনে এত দিনে গায়ে বাতাস লেগেছে। স্বথের চেয়ে পশু ভাল ঘাম দে ছব ছেড়েছে ॥' 'আগি এক আঁচড়ে পেলাম প্রেমের পরিচয়' etc

poetic genius. It is allowable and desirable to pick these ugly weeds out of the garden but unfortunately these unwelcome growths too often choke and destroy the charm even of his beautiful pieces. It is very seldom that we find exquisite and spontaneous utterances in Rām Basu but when we find them there is nothing better in the whole range of Kabi poetry. Songs such as the following

মনে রইল সেই মনের বেদনা ।

প্রবাসে যখন যায় গো সে তারে বলি বলি দলা হল না ।

সরসে মরনের কথা কওয়া গেল না ।

or

বৌবন জননের মত যায়

সেত আসা পথ নাহি চায় ।

or

দাঁড়াও দাঁড়াও দাঁড়াও প্রাণনাথ বদন ঢেকে যেও না ।

তোমার ভালবাসি তাই চোখের বেধা দেখতে চাই

কিছু থাক থাক বলে ধরে রাখব না ।

and many other fine things are praised and they deserve quotation and all that have been bestowed upon them. They are too well known to require comment or quotation again here and they may be found in almost all selections of Bengali songs. But one or two of the less well known may perhaps be welcome again

তোমার প্রেম হতে প্রাণ বিচ্ছেদ আমার ভালবেসেছে ।

প্রেম হল আর দুঃখানো চখে দেখতে দেখতে গেল

অশ্রুর মত বিচ্ছেদ আমার অন্তরে গলেছে

কলহ নির্ঝাঁক হয়ে সশব্দ মিটেছে ।

তোমার প্রেমে সপে প্রাণ কেবল হল অশ্রমান

শুধু হবে কি দল দেখি সাধতে গেল প্রাণ ।

এ সব স্বপ্নেব চেয়ে আনন্দ স্থিতি ভাণ হে  
 সে সব সাধাসাধিব দানে প্রাণ বেঁচেছে ॥  
 পবেব ভালবাসা প্রেনেব আশা সবশি আকাশ ।  
 কোন স্বপ্ন দেখিনা শঠেব প্রানে ছাঃঃ বাবনাস ।  
 কেনশ হাঁসায় আব দাশাঃ সদা প্রাণেতে জাশায়  
 আত্ম নে তোলে সিংহাসনে শাস পথেতে বশায় ।  
 পথে বেঁদে কেঁদে বেড়াই হয়ে আশনাব বনে আশনি চোব  
 সে সব প্রবৃত্তি এখন নিবৃত্তি হয়েছ ॥

প্রাণ, তুমি আশনাব নঃ আনন্দ হবে কি ।  
 মনে মনে মনাঃপ্রণে আমি জগৎ বই আশ বস্তু কি ।  
 অনেক দিনেব আলাপ বোলে আনন্দে ডাকি ।  
 কেনন আছ তুমি, প্রাণ, তুমি শ্রবণে ।  
 প্রাণ গেলে, প্রাণ, নিঃ ছাঃঃ তোমাঃ বশিনে ।  
 সমল বৃন্দেব বাছে সাধলে কান্দনে বস্তু হবে কি ॥

Rām<sup>1</sup> has become the song have been more than once  
 criticised songs for sound of its alleged immoral tendency<sup>1</sup>  
 There is no doubt, as we have pointed, too much of

The alleged immoral tendency of his songs  
 frivolity, grossness, vilification, audacity, smartness of repartee and pursuit of selfish pleasure in most of

these songs and that there is an indecorous laxity of expression, an improper looseness of style which debases the quality of these songs, but the point is too often ignored that what is expressed in these songs is not the love of the analytic and self-questioning artist or the refined rapture of the idealist but the love of the natural man with all the force and crudity of its natural passion Love in

<sup>1</sup> Ohandrasekhar Mukhopādhyāy, *Sārāvat Kuñja* (essay on Rām Basu's *biography*). also see Preface to *Rasabandhā* by the same author

this poetry does not die in dreams nor is it troubled with  
 a deep philosophy or bored with its  
 but their expression of genuine human passion own ideality, soaring into vague passion or indefinite pantheism It is strong naturalistic and direct, if also a little boisterous, unrefined and even gross It is surely too much to bring in moral considerations for judgment upon this honest cry of the erotic passion

বৌবন জনমের মত ব্যয়  
 সেত আশাপাশি নাহি চায় ।  
 কি দিয়ে গো প্রাণপাশি রাখিব উহার ॥  
 জীবন বৌবন গেলে আর  
 কিরে নাহি আসে পুনর্জায়  
 বাচিতে বসন্ত পাব কান্ত পাব পুনরায় ॥

or of

একে আমরা এ বৌবনকাল তাতে কাল বসন্ত এল ।  
 এ সময় প্রাণপাশি প্রদানে গেল ।  
 বখন হাসি হাসি সে আসি বলে  
 সে হাসি মেলে ভাসি নরনের অলে  
 তারে পারি কি ছেড়ে দিতে মন চায় বরিণে  
 লক্ষ্য বলে ছি ছি হবে না ॥

nor is it possible to underrate the palpitating humanity of the following oft quoted lines which may be quoted again

বালিকা ছিলাম ভানো ছিলাম  
 সেই ছিল না মুখ অভিনাব ।  
 গতি চিন্তাম না ও রস জান্তাম না  
 লক্ষ্য ছিল অপ্রকাশ ।  
 এখন সেই শতদল সুদিত কমল  
 কাল গেয়ে ফুটিল ॥

এই খেদ তাবে চখে দেখে নবতে পেলাস না ।  
 আগায় চাক্ বা না চাক্ সদা স্তখে থাক্  
 কেন দেখা দিযে একবার গিবে গেল না ।  
 জীবনো থাকিতে প্রাণ নাথ যদি নাহি এলো নিবাসে ।  
 পূৰ্ণ আশা দিযে সে কেন বইল প্রবাসে ॥

To condemn these expressions of the franker and simpler moods of the passion itself is unjust and canting prudery, and the whole controversy over the question of moral tendency would seem to one to be a signal instance of the wrong thing in the wrong place. It is more than useless or irrelevant either to read austere morals into these poets or damn them for their want of morals. To anyone who can appreciate the *bonhomie* of Kabī-poetry, the songs remain and remain yet unsurpassed, in spite of its very direct plain-speaking (or coarseness if you will) according to modern standards, as the most frank expression of physical affection, of the exceedingly human, honest and natural passion of the man for the woman. The amatory fashion of the world passeth but instead of undervaluing it or sneering at it when it is gone, let us appreciate the reality, force and naturalness of human passion wherever and in whatever shape it may be found.

The *āgamanī* songs of Rām Basu, even more than his *brāh̄* songs, have all along enjoyed a reputation never yet surpassed, and this reputation they certainly deserve.

The *sakhī-sambād* and *brāh̄* songs of other Kabīvalas may approach or challenge comparison with those of Rām Basu, but in *āgamanī* Rām Basu is undoubtedly

supreme The secret of his excellence in this respect lies in the fact that in most of these songs Rām Bān the poet and the man rises superior to Rām Bān the mere literary craftsman and that sincerity, naturalness and simplicity constitute the essence of his charm. It is not the superhuman picture of ideal goodness but the simple picture of a Bengali mother and a daughter that we find in the *Menākā* and *Utmā* of Rām Bān. We seem to hear the tender voice of our own mother, her anxious solicitude for her daughter, her weakness as well as strength of affection in lines like these

তারা হারা হোয়ে নবনের তারা হারা হোয়ে রই ।  
 সদা কষ্ট উমা কষ্ট আমার আশা উমা কৈ ।  
 আমার সেই তারা হারা দিচ্ছা র সারা বিশি এমন মিলালে ।  
 উমা চন্দ্র গনে ডাকছে মা মা মা বোলে ।  
 উমা বহু হেসে কহ ওশে হাসি নয়  
 সেন অত্যাচার স্থপালে জনন জনে ॥

*Menākā* has repeatedly implored her husband to bring back her daughter whom he has not seen for over a year but her husband being apparently apathetic the neglected daughter has come of herself and the tender heart of the mother bursts forth in gentle reproach upon the ponderously indifferent father

তবে নাকি উমার তব কোবে ছিলে ।  
 গিরিমাঝ গুহ তন তন তোমার মেয়ে কি বলে ॥

A short comparative account of the *ayama* of Rām Bān, Kamālī kṛtā and Dāwarāī Rāy will be found in *Bhāratī* Kārtik, 1323 p. 712. The earliest recorded Āgamanī song is that of Rām Prāsād, and in this respect the *Kabīwalas* must have been considerably influenced by Rām Prāsād, Kamālīkṛtā and other writers of devotional songs.



নারী প্রবোধিত মোত হে বৈশ্যাস যাই বোলে ।

এসে বলতে মনকা তোমার ভাংখব কথা

উনা সব জানছে ।

তোমায় দেখতে পাবনি আপনি ঈশানী আদতে চেয়েছে ।

তুমি গিয়েছিলে বই উনা বলে এই হে

আনি আপনি এসেছি জননী বলে ॥

And nothing can be more forcible than this simple yet touching reproof

ভাল হোক হোক ওহে গিবি ।

যাই আনি নারী তাই ভুলি বচনে ।

তোনারো বি মনে হোতো না হে নাথ

হেবিত্তে উনার চলাননে ॥

In most of the *āgamani* songs of the Kabiwalas, the anxious mother dreams of her absent daughter. In Rām Basu the dreams are not bad or gloomy dreams but dreams of joyful anticipation or tender foreboding

গত নিশিযোগ আনি দেখেছি হে স্বপ্নপন ।

এলো সেই আমার তাবধন ।

দাঁড়ায়ে খাবে বলে না বই না বই না বই আমার

দেখা দাও ছাখিনীবে ।

অননি ছবাহ পশাবি উমা কোলে কবি

আনন্দেতে আনি আমি নয় ॥

It is impossible to underrate the simplicity, tenderness and beauty of these lines. There is no touch of ornamental rhetoric, no artificiality, nor is there any refined rapture or philosophic depth in these lines. They embody the simple utterance of a simple heart. What is daily observed and what is natural supply the essential ingredient of these songs, and if the test of poetic power be its

capacity of making the common as though it were uncommon then surely Rām Basu was a poet in the true sense of the term.

After enumerating these greater names which citation however does not exhaust the poetical riches of this remarkable period we come to the lesser poets who accompanied or came behind them. It is however not necessary for us to embark in detail upon the history of Kabi poetry

after this period for after 1830 Kabi poetry languished in the hands of the less inspired successors of Haru, Nīlu and Rām Basu. It continued even up to 1880<sup>1</sup> to be a very popular form of entertainment but it rapidly declined if not in quantity at least in quality. Of this belated group, Nīlu and Rām prasad Thākur<sup>2</sup> Anthony or Antonio the domesticated Portuguese songster<sup>3</sup> Thākurdās Simha<sup>4</sup> Thākurdās

To what degraded state Kabi poetry had descended by that time may be realised by reading the vehemently denouncing article on Kabi poetry which appeared in *Bāndhab* Poas, 1<sup>st</sup> (1876) p. 36.

Nīlmani and Rāmprasad Chakrabarti lived at Simla Calcutta. Nīlu was the younger of the two brothers. Several songs sung in their party are given in *Prākṛit Kāvī Saṅgraha* at pp. 30, 43, 46, 72, 80 etc.

Anthony or Anthony Firingi is said by Rājnarāyan Basu in his *Alal O Śel* to be of French extraction. He lived at Garet near Chandannagar and at one time his Kāvī dal was very famous. He is said to have fallen in love with a Brāhman woman whom he married and through whom he was converted into Hinduism. See for details Dinesh Chandra Sen *Bāṅgabhāṣā O Śāhitya* 3rd Ed., pp. 627-628 *Bāṅga Śāhitya Parichay* (some of his songs quoted) p. 156; *Aṅgabhārat* 1312, pp. 101-03; *Bāṅger Kāvita*, pp. 318-22; *Bāṅgabhāṣār Lekha* pp. 375-377.

Not much is known about him but he was a contemporary and rival of Anthony. See *Aṅgabhārat* 1312, pp. 615-616. Rām Basu used to compose for his party; see *Prākṛit Kāvī Saṅgraha* pp. 38, 40, 80, 63.

Chakravartī,<sup>1</sup> Thākurdās Dāta,<sup>2</sup> and later on Gadādhari Mukhopādhyāy<sup>3</sup> and even Īśvari Gupta<sup>4</sup> obtained considerable reputation as Kāvīvalas or composers of kāvī-songs but we also hear of a host of others Nilmani Pātani,<sup>5</sup> Bholā Mayaiā,<sup>6</sup> Chintā Mayaiā, Jagannāth Banik, Uddhaba dās, Laksmikānta or Lakṣmīnārāyan Jogī (Loke Jugī), Gorakṣa Nāth,<sup>7</sup> Guṇo Dumbo,<sup>8</sup> Bhīmdās Mālākai,

<sup>1</sup> Born in 1209 B S (1802 A. D.) in the district of Nadiya. He never formed his own party but composed chiefly for Antony, Bholā, Balarām Baisnab, Nilmani Pātani and Rāmsundar Svainakār. For details see *Nabyabhārat* 1312, pp 641-48. Some of his songs are given in *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha*, at pp 23, 32, 37, 52, 73, 91 and in *Gupta ratnoddhār*, pp 261-261.

<sup>2</sup> Born in 1207 (1800 A. D.) at Byātrā, Howrah. See *Nabyabhārat*, pp 643-44, *Bangabhāsar Lekha*, pp 325-327.

<sup>3</sup> Composed for the party of Rāmlochan Basū of Joransanko, who was the rival of Mohan Chānd Basu. Also composed for Bholā, Nilu Thākur and Nilu Pātani. See his songs quoted in *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha* at pp 21, 27, 36, 50, 64, 72, 89, 94, 115, 118, 121, 128, 130 etc., also in *Gupta ratnoddhār*, pp 213-247.

<sup>4</sup> His Kāvī songs are quoted in *Gupta ratnoddhār*, pp 247-261, also a few in *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha*.

<sup>5</sup> Rām Basu, Gadādhari Mukhopādhyāy and various other poets composed for him. See *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha*, pp 27, 28, 64, etc. Some of his own songs are given in *Gupta ratnoddhār*, pp 208-9.

<sup>6</sup> Was a sweetmeat vendor at Bagbazar. He was a disciple of Haru Thākur's. See for details *Bhāratī*, 1304, pp 59-66. *Nabyabhārat*, 1314, pp 67-73. *Bānger Kāvī*, loc cit. Some of the songs sung in his party are given in *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha* at pp 21, 37, 50, 67 etc. Jagannāth Banik was his great rival.

<sup>7</sup> Gorakṣanāth was a "composer" of Antony's party but subsequently quarrelled with him and formed his own party (see *Nabyabhārat*, 1312, pp 194-198, *ibid* 1313, pp 577-78). Rāmānanda Nandī was one of his rivals. Gorakṣanāth's sons are given in *Gupta ratnoddhār*, pp 294-296, and in *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha*, pp 43, 70, 110 etc.

<sup>8</sup> *Prāchīn Kāvīsamgraha*, p 66.

Balarām Dās Kāpālī<sup>1</sup> Rāmsundar Śvarnakār,<sup>2</sup> Matī Pasāri Hosain Khān<sup>3</sup> Parāndās and Udaydās Kānā Mahes<sup>4</sup> Mohanchānd Basu<sup>5</sup> Rāmānanda Nandī,<sup>6</sup> Kṛṣṇamohan Bhaṭṭāchārya<sup>7</sup> Jayanārāyan Bandyopādhyāy Bājkiśor Bandyopādhyāy<sup>8</sup> Sātu Rāy<sup>9</sup> and Man mohan Basu<sup>10</sup> It is not possible nor desirable to enumerate all the names but the extraordinary fertility and popularity of this poetry will be sufficiently indicated by the list of names already cited. It is however like the swarming of flies in the afternoon lethargy and fatigue of a glorious day. There is no doubt, occasional sprinkling of good verses as well as a general diffusion of the poetic spirit thinned and diluted.

Lived in Chandannagar. His daughter's son Kṛṣṇadās was a Kabiwālā. *Prachīn Kab saṁgraha* gives some songs sung in his party but they are not of his own composition.

Was a clerk in some office but subsequently became a Kabiwālā. He lived at Hāḍikāṭī Gully Calcutta. Several songs sung in his party will be found in *Prachīn Kab saṁgraha*.

Was the founder of *Tarjā*. Motī Pasāri was his rival.

His name was Mahes Chandra Ghosā a Kāyastha. He was born blind; hence the nickname. For details see *Nabyabhārat* 1313 p. 203-207.

Was the founder of Hapākhāḍī Kabī. His special creation was the *ḥāḍī*. See preface to *Manmohan Gītāvatī* and Rāmānandī Gupta's *Gitaratna*. He was a disciple of Nādhū Babu's who however was not a Kabiwālā. Also see preface to *Prachīn Kab saṁgraha*.

Was a disciple of Nīlāī Bahāḍī. For details see *Nabyabhārat* 1313 pp. 575-579.

His songs are given in *Prachīn Kab saṁgraha* and in a collected form in *Gupṭaratnoddhār* pp. 281-293.

The songs of Jayanārāyan and Bājkiśor are given in *Prachīn Kab saṁgraha*; also in *Gupṭaratnoddhār* at pp. 264-290.

For details about his life etc. see *Nabyabhārat* 1314, pp. 66-67. *Bāḍya Bhāṭya* r *Lāḍhak* pp. 379-80. His songs are given in *Gupṭaratnoddhār* at pp. 27-270.

Was quite a "modern". Not a Kabiwālā strictly speaking but composed for *Kab Hāpākhāḍī* and *Pamchālī*. See *Manmohan Gītāvatī* for his songs.

it may be in course of time, but taken as a whole the later poetry is merely imitative and reproductive of the earlier and does not reward patient and detailed study. Not much of it can bear very well the beauty-truth test implied in the famous line of Keats. Nor are there materials enough to trace their systematic history in this period. In tone and temper as well as in poetic expression it declined considerably, and with the advent of *Hāp-ākhḍāi* first set in fashion by *Hāp ākhḍāi* and *Tarjā* Mohanchānd Basu<sup>1</sup> and of *Tarjā* popularised by Hosain Khān, the form itself as well as its spirit went through striking changes. These songsters no doubt kept up and still keeps up the native trend in poetry but in themselves they never reach that high level of literary excellence which would make them worthy of the attention of posterity. It is therefore not necessary to drag these inferior poets and their poems from their deserved obscurity or devote tedious pages to their comparatively uninspiring annals.

<sup>1</sup> For a history of this see *Sambād Prabhākari*, Agrahāyan 8, 1261, and preface to *Maumohan Gītābalī*

## CHAPTER XI

### LOVE LYRICS AND DEVOTIONAL SONGS

Leaving aside the new prose-writing the period of Bengali Literature between 1700 and 1830 may be not unfitly described as a lyrical interval in which a multitude of productions, varied grave and gay ditties *kabi tappās*, *gātrā pāñchālī*, *ḍhap kirtan bāñl* devotional songs and exquisite bits of love-lyrics were pouring upon the literary world a flood of delicious harmony.

A lyric interval between 1700-1830

There is, no doubt, a sprinkling of narrative and descriptive verse of the more serious type but barring this every poet was a natural vocalist and never there was a time when little songs were more abundant. Although carelessly fashioned these charming little things possess all the attributes of a successful song and seem to be alive with the energy of music. Even the most insignificant person in this synod of latter day poets has a constant tendency to break unawares into singing and catch the spirit of melody which seemed to be in the air. The spirit itself is not so common and the gift of song making not so usual, let us therefore value them while they are here and give them their due homage.

One specific and important phase of this song literature is represented by *tappā* writers who possess this vocal quality in no mean degree, but to many a modern reader the exact signification of the term *tappā* seems to have been lost. A *tappā* is generally taken to be a melodious trifle, a savoury little lyric of the erotic type in which

*Tappā* writers.

Meaning of the word *tappā*.

eroticism connotes wanton or ribald sensuality *Tappā*, however, is a technical term which denotes, like *dhruvad* and *kheyāl*, a specific mode or style of musical composition, lighter, briefer yet more variegated. Etymologically derived from a Hindi word which means 'tipping' or 'flisking about' with the light fantastic toe, a *tappā* means a little song of a light nature.<sup>1</sup> It is more condensed than *dhruvad* and *kheyāl*, having only *āsthān* and *antārā*, and certainly more lively. Being essentially a specific style of musical composition, songs of all sorts, erotic, devotional

Its characteristic  
quality and impor-  
tance

or otherwise, may be composed in this style, but it was suited by its very nature for lighter love-songs and in Bengali at least it had established itself peculiarly and principally for that purpose. As its name implies and its history shows, the *tappā* is not indigenous but it was imported from abroad. It deals with the "minor facts" of art unable by its form and nature to compass the "major" but it has a distinct value as an entirely novel mode of art and as a protest against the conventional literary tradition.

When Nidhu began to sing—and Nidhu Bābu is the earliest important *tappā*-writer of whom we have any record we have, on the one hand, the dictatorship of

Bhārat Chandra and of Rām-prasād,

A new trend in song-  
literature

on the other, the flourishing period of Kabi-poetry and other forms of

<sup>1</sup> See Joges Chandra Rāy, *Bāṅgālā Śabda kośa* under *tappā*. In *Saṅgīt tānsen* (1299 B. S., pp. 66-69) two styles of musical composition are mentioned—*Dhruvad* and *Raṅgīn gān*, under *dhruvad* there are 24 varieties while *Raṅgīn gān* is of 50 kinds. *Kheyāl* and *tappā* are said to be varieties of the latter class. In *Saṅgīt-nāg-kalpadrūm* by Kṛṣṇānanda Byās (Sūhṛitya Paṇṣat ed. 1916, vol. III, p. 294), Nidhu Bābu's *tappās* are comprised under *Bāṅgālā Raṅgīn Gān*. *Tappā*, unlike Kabi, *Pañchālī* or *Tātīā*, was essentially *Barīthakī gān* (or songs for the drawing room) which was appreciated chiefly, if not wholly, by the upper classes.

popular literature. If the date of Bhārat Chandra's death be 1400 and that of Rām prasad a few years later Rāmnidhi Gupta must have been at that time a young man of nineteen or twenty and the influence of Bhārat Chandra and Rām prasad existed widely throughout this period even down to the middle of the 19th century. On the other hand all the earliest Kāvīwalas and Pañchālī kārīs were Nidhiu Babu's contemporaries for the latter lived up to 1838. Nidhiu Babu therefore and most of the *tippā* writers who followed him were born and bred up in the midst of the conventional literary tradition which these two characteristic phases of contemporary literature represented. But Nidhiu Babu followed neither of these beaten paths: he struck out into an entirely novel and original line. With the examples of Bhārat Chandra's *Bidyāsmūdar* and of Rām prasad's devotional songs on the one hand, not to speak of the isolated imitations of still earlier styles and with Kāvīgan and other forms of popular literature on the other Rāmnidhi chose to inaugurate a new type of love-poetry in Bengali in imitation of Hindi *tappā* and *kheyāl* no doubt but with a considerable indication of an original vein. Considering the unquestioned dominance of the current schools and traditions, it is no little or mean indication of courage, originality and genius to establish a new mode of art and in this respect the importance and originality of Nidhiu and the *tappā* writers can never be exaggerated.

The characteristic charm and value of these *tappās* therefore lies in the fact that they are spontaneous and free. They are not hampered by time-honoured conventions nor do they pay any homage to established schools and forms of art. They speak of love no doubt an eternally engaging theme with poets of all times, but they do

Its freedom and  
spontaneity



not speak of Bidyā and Sundar or of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. The poet looks into his own heart and writes, he sings of his own feelings, his own joys and sorrows, his own triumph and defeat, he does not seek the conventional epic or narrative framework for the expression of what he thinks and feels nor does he take refuge under the cloak of *parakīya bhāb* which earlier poets thought essential. The exquisite lyric city becomes rampant and

universal. Ancient literature is mostly and assertion of the personal element objective, if not always narrative and epic, the inward feeling seldom or never out-tops the outward vision, and whatever the poet speaks of himself he expresses through his suitable mouth-pieces. With the *tappā*-writers came an outburst of the personal element, an overflow of sensibility, an enfranchisement of the passion and the imagination for the universal heart of man must be touched through what is most personal and intimate. The sense of the difficulty and complexity of modern problems is, no doubt, absent in them nor do they possess the finish and refinement of modern lyrics, yet the *tappā*-writers foreshadow in their own way that introspective element which has since developed itself in such great measure some think out of all measure in modern poetry.

The *tappā*-writers, therefore, possess originality at an epoch in which nothing of great value was being produced in poetry, they attempt at simple and natural, though not colloquial, diction and write with an easy and careless vigour, they are truthful to nature and avoid frigid conventionality and classicality. But they had as much of the new spirit as their readers were then fit for, and though their work contained the seeds of the impending change of taste, it is an

Novel and original but not entirely modern

absurdity to represent them as thoroughly revolutionary or entirely 'modern'. Regarded from the standpoint of form their songs incline more to the old than to the new. They write with ease and naturalness no doubt but the varying measures and melodies of the coming age were not for them. In ideas and general tone also they did not venture to go beyond certain limits. They preserve in a degree the old posture and the old manner. But in spirit and temper if not in anything else, they herald the new age. The contrast between them and writers like Jaynarayan Ghoshal who was almost contemporaneous, will exhibit the whole

Intermediate place  
between the old and  
the new spirit.

difference between the old and the new poetical instincts. They were therefore, like intermediaries between

the old and the new poets and although casting a lingering look behind they stand at the threshold of the new age of poetry.

Ramnidhu Gupta (or simply and endearingly Nidhu Babu) was the earliest and by far the most important

Ramnidhi Gupta or  
Nidhu Babu, the ear-  
liest and most impor-  
tant / first writer

writer of this group. There was a time when people went into ecstasies over Nidhu Babu's songs and singing.

It is not clear whether Nidhu Babu

was the first dealer in this new species or whether it was he who introduced it into Bengali but the extraordinary power which he displayed and the enormous popularity he enjoyed justify the high eulogy bestowed upon him by his glorious nickname 'the Son Mufia of Bengal'. As a result of the capricious instability of changing taste Nidhu Babu's songs are sometimes severely deprecated to-day and seldom read yet from the artistic as well as historical standpoint these neglected songs it must be admitted possess considerable value and importance.

Rāmnidhi Gupta was born in 1711 A. D. (1118 B. S.) in the house of his maternal uncle at the village of Chāñṣptā near Tribeni<sup>1</sup>. His father lived at Kumāntulī in Calcutta where Nidhi's descendants still reside. Nidhi came with his father to Calcutta in 1717 where he learnt Sanskrit and Persian and also a bit of English from a missionary<sup>2</sup>. Through the efforts of his co-villager Rāmtanu Pāht, dewān of Chhāprā Collectorate, he obtained<sup>3</sup> in 1776 the situation of a clerk in the same office where he continued for 18 years. He gave up the post through a difference of opinion with his official superior Jagannohan Mukhopādhyāy who had succeeded Rāmtanu in the office of the dewān, and returned to Calcutta. While residing in Chhāprā, Nidhi used to learn the theory and practice of music from an expert Mohammedan musician but on finding after some time that the master was unwilling to impart his knowledge to such a quick-witted disciple he gave up Mohammedan music and himself began to compose Bengali songs on the pattern of Hindi *tappās*. He married thrice in 1761, in 1791, and in 1794 or 1795. By his first wife he had a son who died early, but by his third wife he had four sons and two daughters, of whom the eldest son and daughter and the youngest died in his life time. He lived almost for a century and died at the very advanced age of 97 in 1839<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> These biographical details are gathered from various sources but chiefly from the account written by Īśvar Gupta in his *Sambūd Prabhākara* (Śrāvan 1261 B. S.) from which is compiled also the life prefixed to the 3rd edition of Nidhi Babus *Gītaraṇa*, published in 1257 B. S.

<sup>2</sup> *Nārāyan*, Jaistha, 1323, p. 739.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal of the Bengal Academy of Literature*, vol. 1, no. 6, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> For more details, see my article in *Sāhitya Parisat Patrikā*, 1324, pp. 108-110.

During the time he lived in Calcutta he obtained considerable popularity by his music and his song. <sup>1</sup> A big shed was erected at Baṭṭalā Shobhabazar when Nidhu used to sing every night before an appreciative assembly

of the rich and the elite of Calcutta,  
His popularity subsequently the sitting was shifted

to the house of Rasikchānd Goswāmī of Bagbazar. Nidhu Bābu was never a professional singer but he was eagerly sought for and respected by the higher social circles of the then Calcutta. Though himself only an amateur and not a kabiwālā, it was chiefly through his efforts that in 1212-13 B. S. a "reformed" *akkhāṣ* party was established in Calcutta. Mohan Chānd Bāsu of Bagbazar, who first introduced *kāp-ākkhāṣ* and set the tide against the fashion of *kabi* and *ākkhāṣ*, first learnt the new style from Nidhu Bābu whom he always respected as his master. <sup>2</sup> We also learn that Nidhu was a man of grave and sedate character but of contented and cheerful disposition. There are rumours about his partiality for

one Śrīmatī a mistress of Mahārūpā  
and character Mahānanda of Murslidābād but

his biographers <sup>3</sup> take pains to show that this was nothing more than the intimate feeling of cordial friendship. <sup>4</sup> Nevertheless many of his love songs were inspired by her and composed in her honour.

That Nidhu Bābu was an expert musician and that the musical quality of his songs was of a very high order is indicated by the fact that Kṛpānanda included nearly 150 songs of Nidhu Bābu in his great cyclopaedia of Indian songs. In any estimate of Nidhu Bābus (appāṣ) this feature can never be ignored.

Prefatory life in *Gītaraṭas* also Sakibād Prabhākara loc. cit.  
But see preface to *Māsmahān Gītābālī*

Prefatory life in *Gītaraṭas*; Sakibād Prabhākara Śrāvan 1 1261

The stories relating to Śrīmatī and Nidhu Bābu given in *N-rūpaṣ* loc. cit. are mere gossip tales taken from a cheap ill-authenticated Baṭṭalā publication, which was first brought to my notice by Bābu Ramnārāyaṇ Bāsu of Sahitya Parīkṣā.

An accurate and exhaustive collection of Nidhu Bābu's *tappās* has not yet been published. A year before his death was published his *Gītaratna Grantha*,<sup>1</sup> which

His *Gītaratna Grantha* how far authentic and reliable

purported to be a complete collection of his songs. It contains a preface in which the author states his intention of publishing a correct edition

of his songs which had circulated in various forms. A revised edition of this work with a short sketch of Nidhu Bābu's life (compiled chiefly from *Sambād Prabhākar*) was published in 1868 by his son Jyagopāl Gupta. This edition does not differ materially from the first, the only additions take the form of 7 *ākṣṛāi* songs, one *brahma-saṅgīt*, one *śyāmābhāṣayak gīt* and one *bānībandanā*. There are numerous inferior editions.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It contains 141 pages, of which pp 18, in the copy possessed by the Sāhitya Parisat Library, are wanting. The title page says  
শ্রীশ্রীরাধা। শবণ। গীতগুহ এহ শ্রীরাধাশ্রী শ্রীশ্রীরাধাশ্রী শ্রীশ্রীরাধাশ্রী  
প্রকার ছন্দে রাগরাগিনী সহিত শব্দোক্তি ইহা সন ১৮৪৪ খালে বলিকাতা  
বিব্রলান প্রেষে মুদ্রিত হইল। এই পুস্তক শোভাবাহার জনননাম সেনের ইচ্ছিতে  
নং ২০ বাটিতে অধ্যয়ন করিলে পাইবেন।

<sup>2</sup> In 1252 B S (1845) Kṛṣṇānanda Byās Rūgānāgur in his encyclopaedic anthology, *Saṅgīt-rūga kalpadrum* gives a collection of Bengali songs in which he includes more than 150 *tappās* of Nidhu Bābu mostly taken from *Gītaratna* (31 Ed) and arranged almost in the same order. In 1257 B S (1850) an edition (marked as 3rd edition) of *Gītaratna* was published from Battalā but it contains numerous doubtful songs taken from other sources, the genuineness of which however is extremely questionable. In 1293 (1886) was published *Baṅgīya Saṅgīt-ratnamālā* or *Kabībar Nidhu Bābur Gītābālī* a very uncritical collection compiled by Aśtota Ghoshāl (from 55 College Street, Hindu Library, Calcutta). It contains about 160 songs, but in order to make the collection attractive, songs from different sources are passed off as Nidhu Bābu's. The same remarks apply also to the more recent edition (2nd Ed 1303) of Nidhu Bābu's songs published by Baiṣṇab Charan Basāk from Battalā entitled *Gītābālī* or *Nidhu Bābur (Rāmnidhu Gupte) Yābatīya Gītasamgraha*. Besides these, selections

and various anthologies were published in later times but the two editions mentioned are the most authentic sources of Nidhu Bābu's songs. But even in *Gitaratna*, songs are given of which the authorship is uncertain and it cannot be, at least, in any way taken as a complete and exhaustive collection of the songs of Nidhu Bābu.<sup>1</sup> Some songs for instance, which are given here are also to be found in Tārūcharan Dās's *Manmatha Kābya* (1247 B.S.) Banwārī Lal's *Jojana-gandhā* or munsī Erādot's *Araṅgabhāṣā* (1252 B.S.), although it cannot be definitely determined whether it is a case of unacknowledged appropriation by subsequent authors. On the other hand, the famous song ভাগবানিবে বলে ভাগবানিলে। আবার এভাবে এই তোমা বই আর জানিনে<sup>2</sup> is attributed successively to Śrīdhar Kathak, Rām Basu and Nidhu Bābu and is not included in *Gitaratna*. Such celebrated songs as the following নয়নেরে দোষ কেন। ঐখি কি মজাতে পাবে না হলে মন মিলনঃ<sup>3</sup> or ভোনারি তুলনা তুমি প্রাণ এ মইসওলে। or তবে প্রেমে কি স্থখ হত। আমি যায়ে ভাগবানি সে যদি ভাগবানিতঃ<sup>4</sup> always attributed by tradition and by different editors to Nidhu Bābu are omitted in *Gitaratna*.<sup>5</sup>

from Nidhu Bābu's songs are given in the numerous anthologies of Bengali songs and poems such as *Saṅgīt rāg-saṅgraha* (Bāṅgabhāṣī edition 1300) vol II; *Rasabhāṣā* edited by Chandra Sekhar Mukhopādhyāy (Bāṅgabhāṣī office, 1306); *Bāṅgālī Gītā* (Bāṅgabhāṣī); *Prītigītī* edited by Abināś Chandra Ghoṣ; *Bāṅgā Śāhitya Parichay* edited by Dinesh Chandra Sen etc. But the songs in these anthologies are often indiscriminately selected from various sources (besides *Gitaratna*) and are very unreliable from the standpoint of critical scholarship.

This question has been discussed in some detail in my paper in *Śāhitya Parīkṣat Patrikā* (1324 pp. 103-107)

*Saṅgīteśār Saṅgraha* p. 875; *Prītigītī* pp. 153-164.

*Ibid.*, p. 851 *ibid.* p. 127; *Rasabhāṣā* p. 107

*Prītigītī* p. 876; *Nidhu Bābu's Gītābālī* p. 172 According to others, it was composed by Śrīdhar Kathak

In *Saṅgīt rāg-kalpadrūm* and among the additional songs in the third edition of *Gitaratna* (p. 148) the curious song beginning

This will indicate not only the uncertainty of authorship which bears upon many of these songs but also it will probably demonstrate that the *Gītārātna* does not exhaust all the songs of this prolific song-writer. Nevertheless, published during his life time and directly under his authority and supervision, the *Gītārātna* must be taken as the original and the most authentic and reliable collection of Nidhu Bābu's songs.

To many a modern reader Nidhu Bābu is known only his name and reputation, his *tappās* are very seldom read or sung and are often condemned without being read or sung. Writing only sixteen years after Nidhu Bābu's death, Īśvarī Gupta says   
 অনেকেই 'নিধু' 'নিধু' কহেন, কি  
 নিধু শব্দটি কি, অর্থাৎ এই নিধু কি গীতেব নান, কি স্নেহেব নান, কি  
 বাগেব নান, কি মাত্বেব নান, কি কি? তাহা জ্ঞাত নহেন।  
 The established reputation of many a bygone songster has, no doubt, been swept away by capricious change of taste from their venerable basements, but the chief ground for assigning Nidhu Bābu's works to obscurity and oblivion is said by unjust and ignorant criticism to be its alleged immoral tendency. Kailāś Chandra Ghos in his pamphlet on *Bengali Literature* (1885) mechanically echoed this opinion when he wrote 'ইহাব অধিকাংশ গীতই অশ্লীলতা চূড়' and Chandraśekhara Mukhopādhyāy is not less severe or

with ককরে আকাব ছব ছাড়ি লয়ে বল দীর্ঘ ইকায় is given as Nidhu Bābu's, but it was composed by Ānanda Nārāyan Ghos, author of *Gītābālī*, as the *bhanitā* অনিন্দেব নিবেদন মন দিয়া শুন মন would clearly indicate and similarly in *Bangīya sangīta ratnamālā*, the song headed গিরীতি পবন বতন and attributed to Nidhu Bābu is to be found in Michael Madhusūdan's *Padmāvatī*. In the Battalā edition *Nidhu Babu Gītābālī* as well as in Anāth Kṛṣṇa Deb's *Bangei Kabitā* the song তোমাৰ বিয়হ মখে বাঁচি যদি দেখা হবে is assigned to Nidhu Bābu but its author is Jagannāth Prasād Basu Mallik and it is omitted in *Gītārātna* (See *Pratigiti*, p 461)

unjust when he rejected these songs as vulgar expression of sensual passion which, to quote his words, 'আত্মবিসৰ্গনে পরাশ্রয়, আত্মোৎসর্গে কুণ্ঠিত, ভোগবিলাসে কলুষিত, আত্মপরিবেশে অপবিত্র'। It cannot be denied indeed that there is a tendency, in these old time songsters of seasoning their songs with indecencies and audacities of expression which were sometimes very enjoyable to their audience but what we have already said on the moral tendency of the *Kabirwalas* in general and of Rūm Bānū's *biraka* in particular applies to a certain extent to the present question. Without entering into the problem of art for art's sake or art for the sake of morality, the whole controversy over the alleged morality or immorality of these songs is somewhat irrelevant or futile. We must take them for what they are worth and guard at once against reading rigid morals into them or condemning them for want of morals. In

Crude workmanship  
but naturalness and  
sincerity

the first place we need recall what Bankim Chandra said with regard to similar allegation on Isvar Gupta's poetry (তখন লোকে কিছু মোটা কাচ ভাল

বাসিত; এখন সস্তর উপর লোকেই অশ্রদ্ধা) and this distinction between gross and fine workmanship is essential and lies at the very root of certain definite aspects of ancient and modern Bengali literature. In spite of all its faults this gross workmanship has one great advantage viz., that if it is savage uncouth and grotesque it is at the same time trenchant vivid, and full of nervous and muscular energy. Polished or refined embroidery has its charm no doubt but it is also factitious and artificial. It lacks the tone of easy, genuine and natural passion it is something

In the same strain M M Haraprasād Sāstrī speaks of Nidhu Bābū's poems as মোটোমোটো কবিতা কলকল and even a critic like Bankim Chandra could not resist the temptation of having a fling at them in his *Bāghānā*



*soi-disant*, insipid and incomplete. The distinction drawn by modern critics between ornate and grotesque manner, between gothic and classic art, though over-worked and often misunderstood, is one of the fundamental distinctions applicable to a certain extent to this case also. It may be a matter of taste whether a man prefers jagged angularity to harmonious roundness, but what is angular, what is gross, what is grotesque is nearer life in its primal sensations and in its terrible sincerity. It is like the ore fresh from the mines with all its dust and dross yet pure and unalloyed. In the songs of the Kabiwalas and in the *tappās* of Nidhu Bābu, we enjoy these rugged sensations of the natural man, if you will, who regards his passions as their own excuse for being, who does not pretend to domesticate them or present them under an ideal glamour. Their outward ruggedness is a mark of inward clarity. It is partly for this reason that these gross and chaotic songs possess so much appeal for the robust and keen perceptions of the masses but are entirely inaccessible to the decent, comfortable and self-righteous attitude of the bourgeoisie or the refined gentlemanliness of the aristocrat.

These poets were, therefore, in a sense realists or interpreters of real and natural emotions, and their songs are in the legitimate tradition of nature, although not always acceptable to the refined palate of the literary taste. It would, however, be absurd at the same time to suppose that these songs do not possess any touch of that idealism without which no poetry is poetry, they have enough of idealism but they do not deal with ab-

stractions or live upon the air. Take

for instance the intense realism of

their idea of love. With them, Love

is not a cold white ideal rising moon-like over the rapt

Intense realism of  
passion

vision of the love-sick shepherd prince. It is not extramundane, volatile and vague, losing itself in the worship of a phantom woman or rising into mystic spirituality and indefinite pantheism, nor is it sickled over with the subtleties of decadent psychologists or with the subjective malady of modern love poets. It is exasperatingly impressionist and admirably plain-speaking. It does not talk about raptures and ideals and gates of heaven but walks on the earth and speaks of the insatiable hunger of the body and the exquisite intoxication of the senses as well. For these poets realised as every true passionate poet has realised that passion in its essence is not idealism which looks beyond the real but idolatry which finds the ideal in the real for passion is primarily and essentially realistic. It cannot live upon abstractions and generalisations it must have actualities to feed upon. It is not our purpose to consider here whether this idolatrous intoxication of passion is good or bad, but it cannot be denied that it bore ample fruit in the astonishing realism of their love-songs and brought their poetry nearer to world and life and to the actual and abiding spirit of love.

Love is conceived, therefore, in its concrete richness and variety, and not merely under its broad and ideal aspects. This essential realism of passion leads the poet

to take body and soul together and  
not accept the one for the other. He  
is therefore always strong vivid and  
honest very seldom dreamy ethereal

Nidhu Bābū's (appās not offensive or immoral.

or mystic. A sort of traditionary ill-repute however, has very unduly got itself associated with the *tappās* especially with the exquisite bits of Nidhu Bābū's songs. There is a good deal of frankness and a passionate sense of the good things of earth, it is true but even judged by very



উদয় সুখভাৱী আমাৰ নৱনভাৱী তায় পল নিয়মিত  
 কাৰণ না জানি আমি আছি কি মতে ফুলিৱে ।  
 নিশি হয় অবগান বেচল কৰিছে শ্ৰোণ  
 কাহায়ে কহিব বল তাহায়ে কে কবে গিৱে ॥<sup>১</sup>

হৰিষ বিবাদ হুই বিচ্ছেদ মিলন  
 হুয়েয় বাহিৰে মাৰে লেখন এমন ॥<sup>২</sup>

নৱনে নৱনে মাৰি অনিৰিষ হয় আৰি  
 পলক পড়িলে আমি হুই অতি হুখী  
 কি জানি অন্তৰ হও অই তৰ দেৰি ॥<sup>৩</sup>

গাহিলে কৰিব মান কত মনে কৰি  
 দেখিলে তাহাৰ মুখ তখনি পালগি ॥<sup>৪</sup>

ধাকিতে বাগনা দায় চন্দন বনে  
 হুৰমেয়ে ভৱ সেহ কৰে কি কথনে ॥<sup>৫</sup>

মিলন কি সুখনয় কৰে উদয় হল  
 বসিবা হুৰমে হাত বিচ্ছেদ চলিল ॥<sup>৬</sup>

সে আদম আদম যে আদম  
 অধম কল- কহিতে ।  
 দৰপনে শয়ননে আমিৰ বচনে  
 পৱণ শব্দ হুখী আৰিয় লহিতে ॥<sup>৭</sup>

আম কি দিব তোমায়ে স লিহাছি মন  
 মনেৰ অধিক আৰ আছে কি মতন ॥<sup>৮</sup>

<sup>১</sup> *Gitarvina*, 2nd ed p 130.

*Ibid*, p 79

*Ibid*, p 20.

*Ibid*, p. 100

<sup>১</sup> *Ibid* p. 137

*Ibid*, p. 118.

*Ibid*, p. 132.

*Ibid* p 44.

হেবিলে হবিষচিও না হেবিলে নবি  
কেমনে এমন জনে বহিব পাসবি ॥<sup>1</sup>

বিচ্ছেদে যে ক্ষতি তাহা অধিক মিলনে  
আঁথি কি আশা পুবে অণ দবশনে ॥<sup>2</sup>

কিবা দিবা বিভাবরী পাসরিতে নাহি পাবি  
আঁথি অনিমিগ্ন পথ হেবিতে হেবিতে ॥<sup>3</sup>

are examples of undoubtedly fine but spasmodic bursts of the miraculous gift, but, excepting a few poems which are flawless gems in form and substance, his verse often stumbles and halts where there is need for a brisk and sustained pace

But he was undoubtedly a poet of high natural endowments, and the untutored feelings and passions of his heart he could express with unparal-

But true poetic quality  
leled terseness and precision of touch The rarest poetic feeling is oftener found in simpler verse than in an elaborate and studied masterpiece The best and most characteristic of Nidhu Bābu's songs are love-songs, but the limited subject of his verse never matters much, for in them he sometimes reaches a variety and a simple yet magnificent quality which is beyond the accurate black-and-white artist. His oft-quoted songs

নশনেবে দোষ কেন ।

মনেবে বুঝায়ে বল নশনেবে দোষ কেন ।

আঁথি কি মজাতে পাবে না হলে মনমিলন ॥

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid*, p 41

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid*, p 12

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p 9

আধিতে যে বসত হেরে সকলি কি মনে ধরে  
সেই বাক্যে মনে করে সেই তার মনোমগ্নন ॥ ১

তারে ভুলিব কেমনে ।

প্রাণ স পিরাছি বারে আপন ঘেনে ।

আর কি সে ক্রপ ভুলি প্রেম ভুলি করে ভুলি  
কপরে রেখেছি লিখে অতি যতনে ।

সবাই বলে আমাদের সে ভুলেছে ভুল তারে  
সে দিন ভুলিব তারে যে দিন লবে শমনে ॥ ২

or even some of his less known pieces—

কে ও যায় চাহিতে চাহিতে

ধীর গমন অতি হাসিতে হাসিতে ।

যতক্ষণ যায় দেখা না পারি গরিতে

আবি মোর অনিমিত্ত হেরিতে হেরিতে ॥ ৩

আনন্দ ভর করি পাড়াইরে সুন্দরী হেরিতে মনোমগ্ননে ।

নয়নে মনসংযোগ নাহিক ভর গগনে ॥

প্রতি অঙ্গ পূর্ণকিত মুখগন প্রকৃষ্টিত

স্থির করি আছে দেখ চই নয়নবন্ধনে ॥ ৪

না হতে পশুন তরু দহন হইল আপে

আমার এ অতাপ তারে যেন নাহি লাগে ॥

চিতে চিতা পাড়াইরে তাহে দ্বন্দ্বক্লম ঘিরে

আপনি হইব লক্ষ আপনারি অঙ্গরাগে ॥ ৫

Omitted in *Gitarat* but given as *Nidha Bābū* in *P Uiglit*, p. 154; *Sahgīt-sar-sāṅgraha*, vol. II p. 875; *Rasabhā dār* p. 107

Omitted in *Gitarat* a but given in *Gitābāl* or *Nidha Bābū* *Gitasāṅgraha*, p. 131; *Rasabhāndār* p. 100. In *Prīti gīt* the song is attributed to Harimohan Rāy

*Gitaratna* p. 87

*Ibid* p. 87

*Sahgīt-sar-sāṅgraha* vol II p. 850; omitted in *Gitaratna*

বিচ্ছেদেতে বায় প্রাণ না পাবি বাগিতে  
 কাতব নয়ন মনে লাগিল কহিতে ।  
 শুনি নন কবে ধ্যান প্রাণেবে বাঁচাতে  
 চান্দ্র বিহীনে নাহি উপায় ইহাতে ॥ <sup>1</sup>

are fine instances of what he was capable of achieving at his best, and his best is not something to be lightly spoken of

Nidhu Bābu in the preface to his *Gītaraṭna* states that his book is not the first of its kind in Bengali, to what other works of the same nature he refers cannot be determined but we know for certain the existence of a collection of songs by Rādhāmohan Sen, a Kāyastha musician who lived at Kānsāripādā, Calcutta, and who published his *Sangīt taranga*<sup>2</sup> in 1818 (1275 B S). This work, however, is an elaborate treatise on music with the description of

various *Rāgas* and *Rāginīs* and is

Rādhā Mohan Sen and his *Sangīt taranga* in no way directly concerned with our enquiry. It however contains about 123 songs subsequently collected together and published with some additional pieces in the author's later work *Rasa-sāra-sangīt* (1839). These songs, though very popular at one time, are not all *tappās* nor do they

<sup>1</sup> *Gītaraṭna*, p 21

<sup>2</sup> There is a copy of the first edition in the Sāhitya Parishat Library bearing this title page মঙ্গীত তরঙ্গ । ভাষাগ্রন্থ । শ্রীবাধামোহন সেন দাস । হৃত । কলিকাতায় বাঙ্গালি । প্রেসে । বাঙ্গালা বঙ্গবন্ধু । ছাপা হইল সন ১২২৫। ১৭৪০ শক । pp contents and 1-267. Another edition in 1256 B S by his grandson Ādināth Sen Dās. An excellent edition of this work has been published by the Bangabāsī Office and edited by Harimohan Mukhopādhyāy in 1310 B S (1903 A D), which also includes additional songs from *Rasa-sāra-sangīt*

exhibit any marked literary characteristics<sup>1</sup> His short piece<sup>2</sup>

মনের কথা, সেই, এমন অরি ।  
 না কহিলে মরি, তাহা কহিলেও মরি ।  
 যদি না চাহি কহিতে চাহি গোপনে রাখিতে  
 নহে যদি অননের তেজ সে মরি ॥  
 কিঞ্চিৎ কহিতে যার কি কব বাতনা তার  
 মননা নহিবা যার বল কি করি ॥<sup>3</sup>

is so much better than the rest that it would be hardly fair to quote anything else unless we could quote a good deal more.

The minor group of lyrists and songsters in this section are not always strictly speaking writers of *tappās* but they wrote on amatory, devotional and other themes. It is unprofitable to take them in detail for none of them, not even Śrīdhara Kathak or Kālī Mīrjā could approach Nidhu Bābu in variety, extent or power, though all of them show more or less a touch of the natural vocal quality. Their songs (excepting perhaps some deservedly popular pieces of Śrīdhara) do not possess the rare merit of uniting the grace and imagery of the lyric to the music and fashion of song. They are hardly literary and are often carelessly made they are

His *আমি মারী, হর মরি, তনুহে মরন* । বিদ্যাপতি'র নব রাধার জীবন । etc. is often praised but is chiefly imitative of Jayadev's *কবিরাজবংশী* । মাঝে *পুণ্ডরীক* of Bīdyāpati's *কতিহ মরন তনু হহসি হয়রি* । *হার মর* 'মরন হ' *বনাদী* and of Bām Barua's *হর মই হে, আমি বুঝী কেন আলিতে এলে* *কতিগতি* । The idea is conventional.

Besides the Bangabālī edition, Prīyānī gives a good selection of Bādhamohan's noticeable pieces.

*Sargil taranga* (Bangabālī edition), p. 20.



not meant to be read with tone and feeling but really demand to be sung. And what has been said with regard to the musical quality of the songs of the Kabiwalas apply with greater force to *tappā*-writers who were primarily musicians.

Of these later *tappā*-writers, Śrīdhara Kathak stands next to Nidhu Bābu in popularity, poetic merit and probably in chronology. Informations about his life and character are uncertain, indefinite and mostly unreliable. He was born in the village of Bānsbedia, Hughli, probably in 1816 (1223 B S). His father was Pundit Ratankrsna Śuomani and his grandfather was the famous kathak Lālehānd Bidābhusan. Śrīdhara himself was a kathak of considerable power having learnt the art from Kālīcharan Bhattāchāryya of Berhampore but from his youth he was attached by natural proclivities to *kabi* and *pāñchālī* parties. The songs which are now attributed to Śrīdhara are, however, all of the *tappā* type and for these he is justly celebrated. Unfortunately the rival reputation Rāmnidhi has created much confusion and led to the general attribution of many of Śrīdhara's songs to Rāmnidhi and it is almost impossible to-day to disentangle satisfactorily this question of disputed authorship. The famous song

His *tappās* curiously mixed up with those of Nidhu Bābu

ভালবাসিবে বনে ভালবাসিনে ।

আমার স্বভাব এই তোমা বই আর জানিনে ॥

বিধুমুখে মধুব হাসি দেখ্তে বড় ভালবাসি

তাই শুধু দেখিতে আসি দেখা দিতে আসিনে ॥

is popularly assigned to Nidhu Bābu for none but Nidhu Bābu was supposed capable of producing such a beautiful

piece but the song really belongs to Śrīdhara and is not included in Nidhu Bābu's *Gītaraṭna*. The same remark applies to two other fine songs which deserve to be quoted here—

ঐ বার বার চায় কিরে সজল নয়নে  
কিরাও গো কিরাও গো ওরে অমির-বচনে ।  
হেরি ওর অভিমান বুঝে গেল মোর মান  
অমির হতেছে প্রাণ প্রতি পদার্পণ ॥

তলে প্রেমে দি স্বপ্ন হতো ।  
আমি বারে ভালবাসি সে যদি ভালবাসিতো ।  
কিংবাক্ত শোভিত ঘ্রাণে কেওকী কটক হীনে  
ফুল স্টুতি চন্দনে ইকুতে ফল ফলিতো ।  
প্রেমসাগরেদি অল হত যদি সুশীতল  
বিচ্ছেদ বাঁধবানল তাহে যদি না থাকিতো ॥

The number of Śrīdhara's songs which have come down to us is very limited and not more than one hundred songs may be found attributed to him in different anthologies.<sup>1</sup>

Śrīdhara is undoubtedly one of the finest *tappā* writers of this period although he moves within a very limited and inferior range. Most of his songs speak of the bitterness of disappointed love and breathe a note of tender passion marked more or less by absence of rhetorical

His quality as a song  
writer

In *Baṅgabhaṭṭār Lekhak* (vol. I, p. 300) mention is made of 100 songs by Śrīdhara; Love-songs 121 and songs on Kṛpā and Rādhā 35 Śyāmābhāṣyak 4, Gaurābhāṣyak 9 besides some miscellaneous *pada*. But these have not yet been published. Altogether nearly a hundred songs will be found assigned to Śrīdhara in different anthologies and selections.

subtlety and presence of lyrical directness Śrīdhar, like most of his contemporaries, is often slipshod and careless, but he is always forceful and direct. His faults are faults common to the group of too rapid composition, diffuseness and a certain share of the tricks and mannerisms of current verse. Yet when he beats his music out, it has a touching and tender quality. In his best songs the words are few but the linked sweetness of his long-drawn-out melody has a charm of its own. We have quoted some of his well-known songs, here are two from his less known pieces

আমাব মনোবেদনা কতু জানাওনা তায়  
 শুনিলে আমাব দুঃখ সে পাছে বেদনা পায় ।  
 না বাসে না বাসে ভাল ভাল থাকে সেই ভাল  
 শুনিলে মঙ্গল তাব তবুও প্রাণ জুড়ায় ॥

যাবত জীবন ববে কাবে ভালবাসিব না ।  
 ভালবেসে এই হলো ভালবাসাব কি লাজনা ।  
 আমি ভালবাসি যাবে সে কতু ভাবে না মোবে  
 তবে কেন তাবি তবে নিযত পাই এ যন্ত্রণা ।  
 ভালবাসা ভুলে যাব মনেবে বুঝাইব  
 পৃথিবীতে আব যেন কেউ পারে ভালবাসে না ॥<sup>1</sup>

It is impossible to overrate the quality displayed in the above passages, and one can, therefore, understand easily how Śrīdhar's songs got so curiously mixed up with Nidhu Bābu's masterpieces. But, inspite of this extraordinary charm, Śrīdhar is a singularly unequal poet and shines best in a volume of selection. Many passages are mere fustian, others have a beauty not often

<sup>1</sup> In *Prem ahār* (a collection of love songs) ed Kṣīrod Chandra Rāy (1886), pp 94 95 the text of this song has a slightly different wording

surpassed Śrīdhara remain therefore a poet great by snatches

We pass briefly over the name of Kālidāsa Chaṭṭopādhyāy (better known as Kālī Mīrjā) a *tappā* writer of tolerable power and musician of great repute who flourished in the early years of the 19th century. His songs both for their substance and their music had

obtained such instant and merited currency that when Kṛṣṇānanda

Kālidāsa Chaṭṭopādhyāy (Kālī Mīrjā)

Bvāsa Rāga-sagar compiled his enormous cyclopaedia of songs in 1815 (1252 B S) he thought it fit to include more than 200 songs of Kālī Mīrjā's composition. He was the son of one Bijayrāmi Chaṭṭopādhyāy a native of Guptipārijā which was at one time the seat of Hindu learning. Kālidāsa is said to have learnt music in Benares, Lucknow and Delhi and his appellation *mirjā* is said to betoken his high skill and proficiency in that art. After residing for some time with Pratāpachandra of Burdwan he came to Calcutta where he lived thereafter under the magnificent patronage of Coptimohan Thākur. He passed his last days in the sacred city of Benares and died there before 1825.

Kālī Mīrjā composed songs on a variety of topics secular as well as religious of which his *tappās* and *ayāmībhāgavat* songs obtained considerable reputation.

In his devotional songs he follows the tradition of Rām prasad and in one or two pieces he has been able to

Character of his songs.

The entire work *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrūm* was published between 1842-49; the volume containing Bengali songs was printed in 1843. The date given in the introductory portion of Kālī Mīrjā's *Git lekhari* published by Amṛtalāl Bandyopādhyāy in 1901 is incorrect. See preface to *Saṅgīt-rāga-kalpadrūm* (Sāhitya Parishat edition vol. III, p. 9).

catch the spirit, if not the devotional ecstasy, of the earlier devotee

আবে নন তুই নজে যাবে কালীপদ স্মারবনে  
চতুর্দর্গ বন পানি মুক্ত হবি ভব-পাশে ।  
চব্ব কনক-দ্বন্দ্ব হও তাহে নকবন্দ  
তাজ আৰ অশ্ব দন্দ, বাণী কালী সপথের ভায়ে ॥

শবাসনাব বি বাসনা আনাবে এ প্রবঞ্চনা  
কালি কালি যত ভাবি তত বর নিউঘনা ।  
এতই ভাবি অশ্ববে ততই হও অশ্ববে  
দিতে চাই গো নন ভোবে, নন ননে থাকে না ॥<sup>1</sup>

The same level and average quality also characterises his songs on Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa and his *tappās*. His songs are uniformly pedestrian, if not always flat and dull, and monotonously destitute of the peculiar touch of phrasing, the eternalising influence of style which characterises the songs of Nidhu Bābu or Śrīdhara Kathak. The only feature—a feature however which is hardly engaging—is his tendency towards the traditional rhetorical style and his fondness for tasteless conceits and crude devices of punning and alliteration. There is more of conventional poetical imagery than of natural emotion in his songs. One illustration would suffice<sup>2</sup>

অশ্ববে অশ্বব তাবে কবিব কেনে নই ।  
ননে নাহি মনে কবে তাহাব মশ্বব বই ।  
যদি হয় কথাস্তব নাহি হয় মতাস্তব  
অঁখি কবে নিবস্তব যদি হবস্তব হই ॥

<sup>1</sup> *Gītālaharī*, pp. 56 and 64

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102

This brings us practically to the end of the group of *tappā* writers who chronologically belong to our period, although in matters of date and chronology we are not on absolutely firm and safe ground. The tradition, however, was carried on beyond the middle of the 19th century. In *Saṅgīt rāga Lalpadrām* published in 1815 we find the songs of Kālidās Gangopādhyāy Śibchandra Sarkār, Śib Chandra Rāy and Ānanda Nārāyan Ghos and Āśutosh Deb (Chhātu Bābu) all of whom must have flourished in their poetical glory between 1820 and 1840. Later on we get Jagannath Prasād Basu Mallik of Āndul Kust Prasād Ghos of Simla Calcutta, author of *Gītāvalī* and of a large number of English lyrics Jadunāth Ghos of Belur who wrote *Saṅgīt Manoranjan*, Ramapati Bandyopādhyāy author of *Saṅgīt mūlādarsa* Hari Mohan Rāy Rām Chānd Bandyopādhyāy Dayāl Chānd Mitra and a host of others. This minor poetry is of a strangely composite order vacillating between the finest poetic quality of Nidhu Bābu and the dull flatness of Kālī Mirjā. Instead of dealing with these latter day songsters in a piecemeal fashion here we reserve them for detailed treatment in the next volume for the importance of this movement did not end with the period with which we are at present concerned but continued to be sufficiently prominent even in the next quarter of this century.

It would be convenient to notice here briefly the devotional songs of this period which though dealing as they

Gopāl Ude does not properly belong to this group of Baṅgālī *tappā* writers. He was a *yātrāśāla* and although his songs go by the name of *tappā*, in quality and kind they belong to a different species.

do with an entirely different theme and forming a group by themselves, represent a phase of song-writing of this period closely connected with the writing of the passionate love-lyrics. From individualistic and secular love-songs to the ecstatic and personal expression of religious

longing is but a step, the intermediate stage being supplied by the songs bearing upon the personal-impersonal theme of the loves of Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā. But it is remarkable that while *tappā*-writers like Nidhu Bābu, Śrīdhara Kathak or Kālī Mṛgā often pass on from love-lyrics to devotional songs, the writers of devotional songs like Rām Prasād or Kamalākānta, on the other hand, seldom condescend to the more mundane theme of personal love-lyrics.

The most interesting bulk of these devotional songs relates to the worship of divinity under the special image of *Śakti*, although there are several relating to *Śakti* worship songs which relate to other religious

cults. Its origin must be traced to the recrudescence and ultimate domination of the *Śakti*-cult and *Śākta* form of literature in the 18th century, which in its turn traced its origin in general to the earlier *tāntṛic* form of worship. Rām-prasād, the greatest exponent of this kind of song-writing of this period, began his career however as the author of the conventional *Bidyāsundar*,

Rām-prasād, his transition from *Bidyāsundar* to devotional songs

but even through the erotic atmosphere of this half-secular narrative poem, the devotional fervour of the *Śākta*-worshipper expresses itself. The same may be said, although in a lesser degree, of Bhārat Chandra who was also the author of a few devotional *Śākta* lyrics. But when Rām-prasād later on realised the superiority of his ecstatic religious effusions as something more

congenial to the trend of his life and genius and burst forth even in the pages of his more studied and literary narrative poem—

এই বাবে গড়গড়ি গানে হব ব্যস্ত

the literary world began to be flooded with the tuneful melodies of religious ecstasy as a reaction from the comparatively arid thralldom of conventional verse

The conflict between the Śākta and the Bāṣṇab sects obtains in Bengali literature from time immemorial. As on the one hand the Bāṣṇab poets steeped in the speculative, mystic and emotional realisations of the *Śrīmad bhāgavat* were giving a poetic shape of their religious long-

ings in terms of human passion and emotion and figuring forth the divinity as an ideal of love were attempting to bind the infinite through the finite

bonds of life's sweetest and best affections the Śāktas on the other hand were singing the praise and describing the glory of *Ādyā Śakti* through their *Cṇḍī māṅgal* poems.

Regarded as literary ventures these longer and more studied efforts of the Śākta writers no doubt hold a conspicuous place in ancient Bengali literature but the Śāktas could not attain the lyric predominance and passionate

enthusiasm of Bāṣṇab song writers for there is a better scope for losing oneself in poetic rapture in dealing with *bālenīya sakhyā dāya mudhurya* and the other familiar and daily felt emotional states than in describing in a

sober narrative form the feats and glories of the particular deity. The *tantras* no doubt inculcate the worship of the deity under the

image of the Mother but no votary of the cult before Rām prasad realised the exceedingly poetic possibilities of this form of adoration. We

Adoration of god  
head as the Mother  
first realised by Rām  
prasad.

the worship of the deity under the  
image of the Mother but no votary of  
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cannot indeed definitely state whether Rām-prasād was the first poet and devotee to realise this for we find contemporaneously with him a host of such song-writers as, either independently or influenced by him, wrote in the same strain. Rājā Kṛṣṇachandīa himself was a composer of such songs and we find the literary tradition maintained in the royal family by his two sons Śībchandīa and Śambhūchandīa, as well as inferior members of the same family like Narachandīa, Śrīśchandīa, Nareschandra and others. A few songs of this style still remains which contain the *bhānitā* of Māhātājā Nanda Kumārī. It cannot be said that all these song-writers were inspired by the example and influence of Rām-prasād, on the contrary, they might be following a course of religious and literary development which had begun independently but which was made so resplendent by the superior faith and genius of Rām-prasād. Whatever might be the fact, it cannot be denied that it was in Rām-prasād that this new form of adoration of the Supreme Being under the image of the Mother—a form naturally congenial to the Bengali temperament—finds its characteristic expression and discovers a new, easy and natural mode of religious realisation through fine songs, reflecting intense religious fervour in the exceedingly human language of filial affection. The image of divine motherhood, to Rām-prasād and his followers, is not a mere abstract symbol of divine grace or divine chastisement but it becomes the means as well as the end of a definite spiritual realisation. Rising to the radiant white-heat of childlikeness, these poets realise in the emotions of the child the emotions of a devotee. Like the child, the poet is now grave, now gay, now petulant, now despairing, not with the capricious purposelessness of a child but with the deep intensity of purposeful devotion. Thus, not only Rām-prasād in his numerous songs but even his follower, Kumārī



mystery of his mystery stands clear and visible in its own familiar light before our eyes

This transfiguration of the primeval instinct of filial affection of

A child crying in the night

A child crying for the light

into a religious phantasy or poetic rapture is a remarkable achievement of Rām-prasād's songs. The incommunicable

communion between the human soul

Transfiguration of a primitive human instinct, and appeal for a more emotional form of religion

and the divine is communicated through

the exceedingly familiar and authentic intensity of the child's feeling

for the mother. This new stand-

point vivifies religion with a human element and lifts one of the primitive elements of human nature into the means of glorious exaltation. It brings back colour and beauty into religious life and appeals to the imagination and the feelings. Its essential truth lies in its appeal for a more emotional religion and in its protest against the hard intellectuality of doctrines and dogmas. It is not the isolated expression of moral or religious ideas but its fusion into a whole in one memorable personality, expressing itself in a distinctly novel yet familiar mode of utterance, which makes these songs so remarkable. The *tāntrīc* form of worship has its terrible as well as its beautiful aspect, in these latter-day Śākta writers we find an assertion of the rights of the emotional and the æsthetic in human nature. In this view the achievements of Rām-prasād, ably seconded by other devotional songsters who followed in the line, is of a kind which most of the great religious or moral leaders of the race in some way or other performed and which opened up a new source of elevating joy.

But in this idea of the Divine Mother (*mātṛ bhāb*) which primarily follows the authority of the *tantras* and the

natural mental bent of the age and the race and the individual Rām prasād was not little influenced directly or indirectly by the Influence of Baisṇab ideas  
Baisṇab idea of *bātsalya* Through out the history of the Śākta and Baisṇab conflict we find, no doubt, the two sects directly antagonistic to each other and in Bhārat Chandra even in Rām prasād himself, we find the virulence of a militant sectarian zeal But as on the one hand we find a Baisṇab poet like Chandīdās making use of *lūtric* imagery and *lūtric* idea of *saṭchakra sūdhān*,<sup>1</sup> on the other we see Rām prasād, a confirmed Śākta poet considerably influenced and imitation of by Baisṇab ideas in his *Kālī kīrtan* Brndabanlīlā, and *Aṣṭakīrtan* Not only does he imitate in places the characteristic diction and imagery of Baisṇab *padabali*s but he deliberately describes the *gopha rās milan* of Bhagabati in imitation of the *brndāban līlā* of Śrīkṛṣṇa It does not concern us here whether the girl Pārbatī figures in a better artistic light with a *beṇa* and *pāṇḍambāḍī* in her hand or whether the picture deserves the sarcastic comments of Āju Goswāmī<sup>2</sup> what we need note is that here as well as in his *āgamānī* songs, Rām prasād is unmistakably utilising Baisṇab ideas This imitation of the *brndāban-līlā* or of the *bātsalya bhūba* of Yaśodā for Bāla Gopāl was however not wholly isolated,

কিবা কামিকরের আশ্রয় কামিনুদি।

তার মধ্যে হয় পদ রাবিরামে পুরি।

লহসারে হয় পদ লহসক হল

তার পরে নিন্দুর পরম দিবের হল।

quoted from Chandīdās in *Bir bhāṣanī* (new series) vol. II p. 15 which see for a masterly exposition of Prasādī *saḍgīt*

না জানি পরম তব কীটালের অনলয় ঘেরে হয়ে যেত কি চরাহ। ইত্যাদি

sporadic or objectless. It indicated a general desire with these poets of the 18th century to afford a common ground of reconciliation and good feeling between the two antagonistic sects. There is no distinction in reality, says Rām-prasād in many a song, between Bīṣṇu and Śakti, between Kālī and Kṛṣṇa.

প্রসাদ ভণে অভেদজ্ঞান কাঞ্চরূপে মেশানেশি ।

ওবে একে পাঁচ পাঁচেরেই এব মন কব না বেধাধেশি ॥

This attempt at removing *disūdhya* (ill-blood) and at establishing the ultimate identity of the different images of the godhead is at the root of the later song of Kamalākānta

জ্ঞান না বে মন পবন কাবণ শ্রানি ক'হু নেয়ে নয় ।

সে যে মেবেব ববণ কবিরিা ধাবণ কখন কখন পুত্রব হয় ॥

ক'হু বাঁধে ধড়া ক'হু বাঁধে চুড়া নখবপুচ্ছ শোভিত তায় ।

কখন পার্শ্বতী কখন শ্রীমতী কখন বাণেব জানবী হয় ॥

হয়ে এলোকেশী কবে লয়ে অনি দানবচণে কবে সত্ম ।

(ক'হু) এজপুবে আসি বাজাইয়া বাঁশী এজবাসী-মন হবিয়া লয় ॥

যেক্রপে যে জন কবয়ে ভজন সেইক্রপে তাব মানসে বয় ।

কমলাকাণ্ডেব হৃদি-সর্বোববে কনলনাথের কনল উদয় ॥

These devotional songsters in general and then precursor Rām-prasād in particular, therefore, established, through the current from of Śakti-worship, tempered by natural human ideas derived from the no less human Baisnab poets, a peculiar form of religious-poetic communion and, realising this in their own life removed from the turbid atmosphere of controversy,

Originality of Rām  
prasād and his follow-  
ers

they expressed the varieties of their religious experience in touching songs accessible to all. There is no other conspicuous instance of this type of *Sakti* worship through the *Matr-bhāva* in ancient literature. The classical example king Suratha's propitiation of the *Ādyā Sakti* described in the *Markandeya Chāndī* is altogether of a different kind nor could the earlier Bengali Chāṇḍī authors who indulged themselves in hymns or elaborate narratives of praise anticipate the sentiment of tender devotion and half childish solicitation of Rām prāsād.<sup>1</sup> In this respect the originality of Rām prāsād is undoubted and it exalts him to a place all his own.

The Baiṇab poets again describe in their exquisite lyrics a type of love which is lifted beyond the restrictions of social convention and their love-lyrics passionate and often sensuous may in the uninitiated, excite worldly desires instead of inspiring a sense of freedom from worldly attachments. The songs of Rām prāsād and his followers on the other hand, are free from this dangerous tendency. Although these simple and tender longings for the Mother may not in thought and diction compare favourably with the finer outbursts of the Baiṇab poets yet they are accessible indiscriminately to the uninitiated as well as the initiated to the sinner as well as to the saint to the ignorant as well as to the learned. They constitute the common property of all and as in the case of the tender love of the mother, every human child has an equal claim to share it.

The exceedingly humilised picture of Gauṛī or Durgā in Rāmākrānti Sībāṅga or even in Bhārat Chandra's *Anandāmaṅgal* represents an altogether different phase of perhaps the same humilising tendency in contemporary literature.

But this exceedingly difficult task of writing religious songs which should be at the same time artistic and passionate has its own dangers and pitfalls. When the inspiration does not reach its high-water mark, the resulting song is apt to be either dull and flat or laboured and artificial. There is nothing like the dulness of a religious writer at his dullest. This trait, now and then noticeable in Rām-prasād himself, is often very marked in the less inspired song-writers who accompanied or followed him. There is not much in these inferior poets (always with exceptions, of course) which is worth detailed study or attention and we shall pass over them as briefly as possible. Of the two sons of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandīa, Rājā Śībchandra and Kumār Sambhūchandra, the latter is a better poet, no doubt, but his productions are stilted and conventional and are of too trifling a quantity to deserve any further comment. The production of Kumār Narachandīa, a member of the same family, are however more abundant and are of a better quality, though not absolutely free from the same trait. He could reproduce the spirit and even the language of Rām-prasād pretty well. We select three of his songs (beside one which we have already quoted) which are not so well-known as they ought to be.

Dulness and artificiality of the less inspired successors of Rām-prasād

Rājā Śībchandra and Kumār Sambhūchandra

যে ভাল কবেছ কালি আব ভাগ্যে কাজ নাই,  
ভাগ্য ভাগ্য বিদায় দে মা আগেয় আগেয় চলে যাই ॥  
মা তোমাব ককণা যত বুঝিলাম অবিবত  
ডাকিলাম কত শত কপাল ছাড়া পথ নাই ॥  
জঠবে দিয়েছ স্থান কবোনা মা অপমান  
কিমে হবে পবিত্রাণ নবচন্দ্র ভাবে তাই ॥

কেন মিছে মা মা কর মাগের দেখা পাবে নাই  
 থাকলে আসি দিতো দেখা লক্ষনারি বেঁচে নাই ॥  
 শ্রমানে মশানে কত পীঠস্থান ছিল বত  
 পুছে হলান ওঠাগত কেন আর যরণা পাই ॥  
 বিমাতার তীরে গিরে কুলপুতুল দাড়াইরে  
 অনোচাও পিত্ত গিরে কালানোচে কাশি বাই ॥  
 বিজ নরচন্দ্র তলে মাগের মস্ত তাবনা কেনে  
 মা নাম গেছে শিব ত আছে তরিবার তাবনা নাই ॥

যে হয় পাবনের মেয়ে তার মনে কি দয়া থাকে ।  
 দয়াহীনা না হলে কি নাথি মারে নাগের বুকে ॥  
 দয়াময়ী নাম অগতে দয়ার লেশ নাই তোমাতে  
 গলে পর মুক্তমালা পরের ছেলের মাথা ঠুকে ॥  
 মা মা বলে বত ডাক শুনে ত মা শুনে নাক  
 নরা এমনি নাথি-বেকো তবু ছর্গা বলে ডাকে ॥

Such simple yet direct utterances become rarer as we  
 pass on to later writers of this group. The following  
 songs which bear the *bhakti* of  
 Dewān Nandakīśor Nandakumār is supposed by some to  
 be the composition of Nanda Kīśor  
 Rāj, Dewān of Burdwan Rāj but may possibly be a soli-  
 tary song of Mahārāj Nandakumār accidentally preserved

কুলন জ্বলানি গো জ্বলনমোহিনী ।  
 মূল্যধারে মহোৎপলে বীণাবাদ-বিনোদিনী ॥  
 শরীরে শরীরী বয়ে প্রণয়াদি অর তরে  
 শুণভেদে মহাময়ে তিনগ্রাম সকারিণী ॥  
 আধারে তৈরবাক্যর বড় দলে ত্রিমাগ আর  
 বলিপূরেতে মমার বন্য কথপ্রকাশিনী ॥



But this exceedingly difficult task of writing religious songs which should be at the same time artistic and passionate has its own dangers and pitfalls. When the inspiration does not reach its high-water mark, the resulting song is apt to be either dull and flat or laboured and artificial. There is nothing like the dulness of a religious writer at his dullest. This trait, now and then noticeable in Rām-prasād himself, is often very marked in the less inspired song-writers who accompanied or followed him. There is not much in these inferior poets (always with exceptions, of course) which is worth detailed study or attention and we shall pass over them as briefly as possible. Of the two sons of Rājā Kṛṣṇachandīa, Rājā Śibchandra and Kumār Sambhūchandra, the latter is a better poet, no doubt, but his productions are stilted and conventional and are of too trifling a quantity to deserve any further comment. The production of Kumār Narachandīa, a member of the same family, are however more abundant and are of a better quality, though not absolutely free from the same trait. He could reproduce the spirit and even the language of Rām-prasād pretty well. We select three of his songs (beside one which we have already quoted) which are not so well-known as they ought to be.

যে ভাল কবেছ কালি আঁব ভালতে কাজ নাই,

ভালয় ভালয় বিদায় দে মা আলোয় আলোয় চলে যাই ॥

মা তোমাব করুণা যত বুঝিলাম অবিবত

ডাকিলাম কত শত কপাল ছাড়া পথ নাই ॥

জঠবে দিয়েছ স্থান কবোনা মা অপমান

কিসে হবে পবিত্রাণ নবচন্দ্র ভাবে তাই ॥

কেন মিছে মা মা কর মাগের সেবা পাবে নাই  
 পাকলে আসি দিতো সেবা নরনারায়ণ বেঁচে নাই ॥  
 মশানে মশানে কত পীঠস্থান ছিল যত  
 বুজে হলাম ওটাগত কেন আর বহুলা পাই ॥  
 বিনাতার তীরে গিরে কুশপুতুল দাড়াইয়ে  
 অনৌচাতে পিত্ত ঘিরে কালানৌচে কাশ বাটে ॥  
 বিজ নরচন্দ্রে ভবে মাগের ভক্ত ভাবনা কেনে  
 মা নাম গেছে শিব ত আছে তরিতার ভাবনা নাটে ॥

যে ছয় পাখণের মেয়ে শয়র সঙ্গে কি দয়া থাকে ।  
 দয়াহীনা না চলে কি নাথি মারে নাথের বুকে ।  
 দয়াময়ী নাম অগতে দয়ার লেশ নাটে তোমাতে  
 গলে পর সুওমালা পদেয় ছেলের মাথা ঠুকে ॥  
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কুলন কুলানি গো কুলনমোহিনী ।  
 সুলভারে মহোৎপলে বী ॥ বাত-বিনোদিনী ॥  
 শরীরে শরীরী বয়ে এতাদি অর তয়ে  
 শুভভেদে মহাধরে তিনগ্রাম সকারিণী ॥  
 আধারে তৈরবাকার বড় দলে শ্রীরাগ আর  
 মণিপুরেতে বদার বগদে দ্বন্দ্বকালিনী ॥

নিশ্চয় হিমোৎসবে বর্ণাটিক আভাষ্যবে  
 তাশ মান যম স্রবে ত্রিসম্প্রসবভেদিনী ।  
 মহামায়া নোহপাশে বক কব অনায়াসে  
 তব যয়ে তযা-বশে দ্বিষ তাচে সৌদামিনী ।  
 শ্রীনন্দনায় কব তব না নিশ্চয় হে  
 তব তব গুণত্রয় কবি কবে আভোদিনী ।<sup>1</sup>

This song is quoted here not so much for its historic interest nor for any special merit but as a specimen of the artificial and tedious style of later poets. The same tendency of indulging in symbolism, didacticism and banalities under a spiritual glamour is also remarkably noticeable in the songs

of Dewān Raghunāth Rāy of Burdwan, a brother of Nandakīśor, but Raghunāth was not a Śikṭa of the narrow type and addressed several songs to Kṛṣṇa as well, in some of which he maintains the eventual identity of this Bṛṣṇab deity with the special divinity of his adoration. It is hardly necessary to quote specimens but the following song<sup>2</sup> is the nearest approach to the style of Rīm-prasād which had been all along the deservedly recognised standard.

পড়িয়ে ভবমাগবে ডুবে না তলব তবী ।  
 মাধ্ব-কুণ্ড মোহ-ভুবান ক্রমে পাডে গো শম্বরী ॥  
 একে মন-নাথি আনাডি তাতে ছ-সন গোলাব দাঁড়ী  
 কুণ্ডালসে দিয়ে পাড়ি হাবড়ুবু থেয়ে মবি ।  
 ভেসে গেল ভক্তিব হাল ছিঁড়ে গেল শ্রদ্ধাব পাল  
 তবী হল বাঁচাল্ বল এখন কি কবি ।  
 উপায় না দেখি আব অকিঞ্চন ভেবে সাব  
 তবসে দিয়ে সঁাতাব তর্গানানেব ভোলা ধবি ॥ ২

<sup>1</sup> The *bhāmī* has Nandakumār and not Nandakīśor

<sup>2</sup> The *bhāmī* of Raghunāth in these songs is অকিঞ্চন

Thus Burdwan like Nadivā, had been for a long time the centre of these activities and we find even Mahārājā Mahatābhāṇḍ who was a song-writer of no mean merit, carrying on this literary tradition till his death in 1897. Of this Burdwan group the most famous and indeed the most remarkable poet is Kamalākānta Bhaṭṭāchāryya, a native of

Kamalākānta  
Bhaṭṭāchāryya

Ambikānagar in Kālā who subsequently removed to Koṭālbāṭ in Burdwan and lived under the royal patronage

of Mahārājā Tejaschandra. Of the later group of devotional poets Kamalākānta approaches Rām prasad very closely in tone and feeling and style. Mahatābhāṇḍ printed in 1857 from the poet's own manuscript nearly 250 songs which have been thus beautifully preserved. This collection was reprinted in 1885 by Śrīkānta Mallik in Calcutta under the title *Kamalākānta Padāvalī*<sup>1</sup> and it certainly deserves reprint again.

It is impossible within the limited scope of our plan to analyse these three hundred songs in detail or to quote extensive specimens which alone would illustrate the depth, variety and beauty of Kamalākānta's songs. Like the songs of his great predecessor Rām prasad his songs reveal to us the inward history of his spiritual life: the various stages of his religious experience from worship and adoration to the attainment of the state of highest felicity. It is not his meditative speculation nor his theological tenets nor the vague coating of symbolism in his songs which constitute their charm: over and above all these tower his spiritual sense, his imagination and his emotions, his extraordinary personality and the palpitating humanity which vivifies every line, imparts a soul-felt meaning to his devotional songs. He expresses common needs, common

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this was lent to me by the Sādhya Parishat Library.

thoughts, and every-day emotions of the religious man, and if he is a mystic, his mysticism is not of the esoteric order. It is difficult to quote specimens when one must confine oneself to a limited number but the following songs, well-known as they are, are quoted to make them better known

আব কিছু নাই শ্রামা মাতোব কেবল চুটি চবণ বাঙ্গা ।  
 শুনি তাও নিখেছেন ত্রিপুরাবি দেগে হলাম সাহস ভাঙ্গা ॥  
 জাতি বন্ধু স্তত দাবা স্নেহেব সনয় সবাই তাবা  
 বিপদকালে কেউ কোথা নাই ঘববাড়ী ওড়্‌গায়েব ভাঙ্গা ॥  
 নিজগুণে যদি বাথ করণা নয়নে দেখ  
 নইলে জপে তপে ভোমায় পাওয়া সে সব কথা ভুতের সাদ্ধা ॥  
 কমলাকান্তের কথা মাকে বলি মনেব ব্যথা  
 আমার জপেব মালা কুলি কাঁথা জপেব ধবে বইল টাঙ্গা ॥ <sup>1</sup>

কালি সব খুচালি লেঠা ।  
 স্ত্রীনাথের লিখন আছে যেমন বাথবি কি না বাথবি সেটা ॥  
 ভোমাব যাবে রূপা হয় তাব সৃষ্টিছাড়া কপেব ছটা ।  
 তাব কটিতে কোপিন যোড়ে গায়ে ছাই আব মাথায় জটা ॥  
 শ্মশান পেলো স্নেহে ভাস তুচ্ছ বাস মণি কোঠা  
 আপনি যেমন ঠাকুর তেমন খুচলোনাক সিদ্ধি খোঁটা ॥  
 হুখে বাথ স্নেহে বাথ কববো কি আব দিয়ে খোঁটা  
 আমি দাগ দিয়ে পবেছি যখন পুঁছতে নাবি সাধের ফোঁটা ॥  
 জগৎ জুড়ে নাম দিয়েছ কমলাকান্ত কালীব বেটা  
 এখন মায়ে পোয়ে কেমন ব্যাভাব ইহাব মৰ্ম্ম জান্বে কেটা ॥ <sup>2</sup>

One characteristic note of these songs is its sincerity, a sincerity which redeems even the slightest song from insignificance and confers on the finer pieces an importance

<sup>1</sup> *Kamalākānta Padāvalī*, p. 29

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

of a different order from that which attaches to even the most brilliant productions of his contemporaries. The popular opinion which places Kamalākānta next to Rām prāsād is fully justified and we conclude by quoting the lines of Nīlāmbar Mukhopādhyāy a later poet, who eulogises Kamalākānta and Rām prāsād in the same breath

মায়ের প্রজা হওয়ে আসি ।

মায়ের সমভাব নাই কমি বেশি ॥

রামপ্রসাদ এক পাটা পেরে মহত্ম্য করেছে কানী

কমলাকান্ত ডেক নিম্নেছে শ্যামা ভাবছেন বোলে

আগার কোথায় পাব কানী ॥

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## CHAPTER XII

### MISCELLANEOUS WRITERS IN THE OLD STYLE

The period of interregnum in poetry which followed upon Bhārat Chandra's death had been, we have seen, essentially a lyric interval in which we find the Kabīwalas,

Writers of the poetical interregnum      *tappā*-writers and authors of devotional songs creating a body of literature which, if not great in positive achievement, is at least remarkable in the negative quality of marking a natural reaction against the ornate and classical type of literary practice of the 18th century. At the same time the groups of writers mentioned never separate themselves wholly from the traditions of the past nor do they work their way from the older to the newer style of the 19th century. In this sense, they are neither ancient nor modern, neither do they represent the past adequately nor indicate and foretell the future. They were at the same time incapable of great literature, nor were the times suitable for it. They are not, it is true, idle singers of an empty day, but they deal essentially with trifles, though with trifles

The intermediate position of the lyric songsters, Kabīwalas and others      poetically adorned. Occupying, as they do, an intermediate position between the ancient and the modern writers, they yet afford no natural medium of transition from the school of the past to the school of the present. They create a literature of their own, limited and circumscribed by their own peculiarities and the peculiarities of their circumstances, too old to be entirely new, too new to be entirely old, for although possessing lyric quality, they have little affinity to modern

lyrists nor can they be definitely affiliated to any recognised school of ancient writers

But the poets and songsters whom we propose to take up in this chapter unlike the writers already dealt with definitely and unmistakably tread in the footsteps of the old world poets. Their poetic gift move within the narrow compass of conventional art, and though exhibiting widest

Writers dealt with in this chapter are however relics or survivals of earlier days, and belong in spirit and form to the past

individual differences these imitative poets are bound by the common characteristic of belonging to the past, both in form and spirit. Being thus artificially limited they are hardly original, except in so far as

they may vary a single tune by playing it upon the several recognised stops. This department of verse therefore is singularly depressing. Except in inspired snatches there is hardly anything of first rate quality and the great bulk of this narrowly imitative literature is flat and tedious. The recognised literary species had been already suffering from exhaustion of material and the declining powers of these belated imitators could hardly impart to them a spark of vivifying force.

Want of subject-matter and of capacity for original achievement is precisely the defect of this poetry. In the first place, we have a group of writers who follow the time-honoured tradition of translating the

Proposed groups of writers. Sanscrit *Rāmāyaṇ*, *Mahābhārata* and *Sītmad-bhāgavat* into the vernacular

Next we have a band of minor poets—some of them not merely minor but insignificant—who wrote verse-tales of the erotic type in imitation of Bhārata Chandra but who could not reproduce his poetry as they could magnify the dull obscenities which unfortunately taint his writings. After them, come a host of miscellaneous songsters—most



of them literary nondescripts—among whom we need notice in some detail the authors of *pāṁchālī* and *gītā*.

The translators of this period inherited the tradition but lost the art which had made their predecessors *krttibās* or *Kāśidās* immortal. A little before 1760, we have a number of notable translations among which may be mentioned the delightful version of *Gītāgobinda* by Guddhai, but after 1760, this department of literature is hardly graced by any remarkable achievement. The translators of this period hardly exhibit any striking literary feature and it would serve no purpose to recapitulate their half-forgotten names. Of these, however, Raghunandan Gosvāmī, though not exactly a translator, is remarkable for his re-writing of the themes of *Rāmāyaṇ* and *Bhāgavat*. Raghunandan<sup>1</sup> was, as he himself tells us, born in the village of Mā'o near Mānkai, Burdwan. His dates are not exactly known<sup>2</sup> but he undoubtedly belongs to our period, for Rāj-nūāyaṇ Basu in his *Ekāl O Sekāl* relates how Raghunandan used to come very frequently to Calcutta to meet the lexicographer, Rāmkamal Sen. His two considerable works are *Śrī-Rām-rasāyaṇ* and *Śrī Rādhā-Mādhaborodaya*, besides *Gītāmālā*, a work on Kṛṣṇa-līlā. Although both these works belong chronologically to a later period—the latter, as its colophon says,<sup>3</sup> having been composed in 1849 and the former

<sup>1</sup> He gives some account of himself and his family at the conclusion of his *Rām rasāyaṇ*.

<sup>2</sup> The Bangabāsī edition of his *Rām-rasāyaṇ* gives 1786 (1193 B S) as the date of his birth.

<sup>3</sup> শ্রীরাধামাধবপ্রোঃ শ্রীতরে ভবতু শাকহর্ষে আসপ্ত সপ্ত আমিতে বৃষসংক্রমে গদ্যতীরে পাবিশটীত্রীমেহর পূর্ণতিমিগাৎ। Published by the author's son Madan Gopāl Gosvāmī in 1890 (1297 B S).

probably in 1831<sup>1</sup>—it could be convenient to notice them briefly here. His *Pām rasāyāṇ* a voluminous and laborious production is a tolerably well written version of the

*ā Rām Rasāyāṇ* *Ramayan* chiefly based upon Vālmīki but supplemented from other sources

The language is clear vigorous and picturesque, although indicating a decided leaning towards Sanscrit words and the work is composed throughout in the *jayār* metre, occasionally diversified by varieties of *tripadī* and other common metres. Strictly speaking the author is not close or literal or even faithful in his version which is more than a mere translation. There are considerable additions and omissions<sup>2</sup> and the whole theme is treated with a freedom which characterises most of the early translators. The author possesses a marvellous narrative gift which makes his work interesting. It is not accurate to state that the author is merely a learned pundit entirely devoid of poetic gift<sup>3</sup> or power of delineating character but his poetic gift is not equal to his capacity of rhythmical expression and his command over a more or less finished style. In spite of all its faults, it is however a very remarkable production and to regard it as perhaps the best Bengali version of the *Rāmāyāṇ* after Kṛttibāsa is not altogether unwarranted. In his next work *Śrī Rādhā Mādhava oḥaṇ* however, the Baṅgāb Rāghunandan found

This date is given in the preface to the Baṅgābāl edition also in *Baṅgābāl r Lekhak* p 210. It could not have been as Dīnesh Chandra Sen states (*H story* p 193) composed in the middle of the 18th century.

Especially in *Uttarāṇḍa*

See especially the poetic description in অগ্নিকান্ত বট পঙ্খিমেশ; কবিতাকান্ত বট পঙ্খিমেশ and the last chapter on ঈশ্বরচন্দ্রের অশোকবন বিহার (উত্তর কাণ্ড)।

*ekābali, lalitā, totaka payākaṭika jamaka, tnnaka, wātrū  
bṛttikatnspadī śoḍaśākārī kūñchi jamaka* to mention  
only a few—in his *Rādhā Mādhābodaya*. The following  
description of the heroine's beauty although showing  
considerable skill is yet conventional and illustrates the  
author's leaning towards Sanscritisation.

সখি দেখহ সখি দেখহ, নবনীপক মূলে ।  
তাজি অপর ধরীগর নবনীপদ বূলে ॥  
দলিতাঙ্গন-চর গগন মধুর ছাতি আলো ।  
কক প্রাণল পৃথিবী তল নভমণ্ডল তালে ॥  
চপলা ততি বলকে অতি ধির অদ্বুত কাঁঠী ।  
অতি পাণ্ডুর কচি মধুর বিলসে বকপাঠী ॥  
স্বরসুপতি-বহুপ্রাকৃতি বহু রসহি সাজে ।  
স্বমাদ্বুত অতি অদ্বুত শনিমণ্ডল রাজে' ॥

The same remark applies to the following description  
of Rām in his *Rām rasāyaṇ*

অরতি অরতি ধরীগতি অরতি অরতি রাম ।  
অনক-নৃপতি-হরিতা পতি নিঃশল শুণধাম ॥  
কোটি-মদন-মদ শশন পদনধ কচিলেশ ।  
চরণ-কমল কচিমণ্ডল জিত-নবদ্বিবেশ ॥  
কদলী-তরু-অললিত উরু মধ্যম অতি ক্ষীণ ।  
রমণী-মন-মৃগ-নর্জন মনীষট উরু পীন ॥  
বদিতাকুল-ধৃতি-শৈবল ভঞ্জন ভূষণ্ড ।  
বদিতামদ তিধির বিপদ কয় শশধর তুণ্ড ॥  
মিথিলা পতি-তনয়া-মুতি-দলন-নয়ন বাণ ।  
রমু-নৃপকুল-বিমল-কমল বিকশন দ্বিভান ॥'

These short lyrics are, however, inadequate for giving an idea of Raghunandan's style, but they will sufficiently indicate both his merits and defects. Raghunandan is by no means a slovenly writer but in his striving after technical perfection, he is often elaborate and artificial. His writings display faultless execution and a great command over the language, but ingenuity and verbal or rhythmic dexterity can never supply perennial nutriment for art. It is only when Raghunandan rises above these prepossessions and he does this not very seldom that he exhibits poetical quality of no mean order.

Next to Raghunandan, the royal poet Jaynārāyan Ghosāl of Bhūkailāś (1751-1821) deserves mention. After spending the greater portion of his life in the service of the Nawāb and in the confidence of the company Jaynārāyan obtained the title of Maharaja Bahadur from the Emperor of Delhi. During his last days, he passed a retired life of religious devotion at Benares where he has left too many traces of his large-hearted benevolence.<sup>1</sup> It was here that he conceived the idea of translating the *Kāśī-Khanda* into Bengali. The whole history of the undertaking is said forth by Jaynārāyan himself in the last chapter of his work.<sup>2</sup> The translation, begun in 1792, was completed in a hundred chapters (about 11,200 lines) under the joint authorship of Jaynārāyan, Nrsimha Deb Rāy of Pātuli, Jagannāth Mukhopādhyāy, Bakreśvar Pañchānan and several other scholars and poets. After the completion of the hundred chapters, several supplementary chapters, which stand by themselves, were added by

<sup>1</sup> For more details about his life, see *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patikā*, vol. vi, p. 1-25, *Sāhitya*, 302 pp. 1491-6, Preface to the *Sāhitya Pariṣat* edition of Jaynārāyan's *Kāśī parikramā*.

<sup>2</sup> See *Kāśī parikramā* (*Sāhitya Pariṣat* edition), Ch. xiii, pp. 222-24.

Jaynārāyan himself giving a more or less faithful picture of contemporary Benares drawn from the poet's own observation. The work itself is a tedious and laborious compilation but this supplementary account which is the best part and

*His Kāśī-parīkramā* which has been published separately under the title of *Kāśī parīkramā*, is

indeed very interesting as a good specimen of descriptive poetry of this period. The topography and other details of the holy city are given with elaborate care, and in places the descriptions are original, amusing and considerably realistic. The *parīkramās* are not rare things in old Bengali literature and we have *Nabadoīpa Parīkramā* and *Brajāparīkramā* of Narahan Chakrabarti and a prose *Bṛudābana Parīkramā* belonging to the 18th century. With these works of the same nature *Kāśī parīkramā* does not compare unfavourably, and as a more or less trustworthy contemporary account of the holy city, the work is certainly valuable. But from the strictly literary point of view, it seems to possess little interest or importance. Jaynārāyan is a facile and methodical versifier but he is hardly a poet. The pictorial nature of his theme no doubt afforded many opportunities for higher poetical flights but the author is so entirely devoid of the soaring gift that he is uniformly and hopelessly pedestrian, although occasionally he gives us undoubtedly vigorous descriptive verses. He has no fancy, no enthusiasm and his over praised composition<sup>1</sup> is often merely prosaic and always rigidly conventional. The only praise which he deserves relates to the fact that although he adheres both in spirit and form to the traditions and expectations of the time, he yet devotes a stern attention to the realities of scenery and character described. His pictures however sadly lack a touch of that light which

<sup>1</sup> Dinesh Chandra Sen, in *History* loc. cit. in *Sāhitya* loc. cit.; Nagendra-nath Barn, preface to the *Sāhitya Parīpat* edition of *Kāśī-Parīkramā*,

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Dinesh Chandra Sen, in *History* loc. cit. in *Sahitya*, loc. cit.; Nagendranath Basu, preface to the *Sahitya Parishat* edition of *Kāśī-Parikramā*,

was never on sea and land and which alone could have made them poetic. He is a good photographer but not a painter, and whose considers him as such may appreciate

him better. Jaynāīāyan's other published work, *Kaṁunā-nidān-bilās*,<sup>1</sup> although less known, is much better

production. Purporting to be a work devoted to the glorification of the special deity whose image the author had set up at Kāśī and from whom the book derives its name, it really treats of Kṛṣṇalīlā in a refreshingly original and poetical way.

Other minor writers, who favoured the old style and belonged to this group, need not and can not in a book like this dealt with at much length. We must, however, mention, if not enlarge upon, a school of poets (or rather versifiers) who were the direct imita-

School of Bhārat chandra  
tois of Bhārat-chandra and continued the style of *Bidyāsundar* even beyond

the fifties. Bhārat-chandra, like Rām-piāsād in another sphere, had been through his *Bidyāsundar* the ruling power for nearly a century. Writing under the shadow of his genius, this belated group of writers are all servile copyists, reproducing the style and scheme of his *Bidyāsundar* down to minute details but unable to repeat its poetry, they

exaggerate its freedom into licence.

Poor and vulgar  
imitation of *Bidyā  
sundar*  
The details of Sundar's amours, his intrigues, his capture and ultimate union with Bidyā are all repeated anew in a more or less diversified form, but the

<sup>1</sup> A printed copy of this will be found in the Calcutta Imperial Library. The book is included in the list of books published by the School Book Society before 1821. Long, in his article in *Calcutta Review*, xiii 1850, describes this work as "an account of a new god recently created by a rich native." For an account of the work, see *Śāhitya Parīkṣā Patikā*, loc. cit.



stories are brutally and uncontrolledly indecent although generally presented like their prototype under the all atoning garb of religion and their heroes are typical Don Juans in the worst sense. The plots are more elaborate and the series of adventures desperately fantastic though presented with the monotonous sameness of scheme. There are places where Bhārat-chandra is free and coarse enough, but in these his gifted followers attempt to outdo their master in his own ground and hobble along in wretched drawing out of the vulgar parts of the theme, floundering in the mud which they delight in but which is as foul and dull as ever human imagination could conceive. The versification is poor the descriptions dull and conventional, and there is hardly any elevating poetic touch or other redeeming feature in these verse tales which are never graceful but always graceless in one particular. It would be a mistake to attribute all this to the influence of Persian tales for it is not clear whether these foreign tales were

Their depraved taste  
not due to Persian  
influence.

abundantly accessible and well known to the writers of this generation and even when accessible it is not clear whether such tales are really as bad as

they are often represented to be. The Persian tales, to judge from the specimens which have survived, very seldom sink to that depth of indecent realism where these productions of a degenerate and depraved taste do often wallow. On the other hand these elaborate Bengali tales unmistakably bear the stamp of *Bidyāsundar* style run riot. It would be better to regard them as representing a phase of the development of literary taste in this period of instability and degeneracy which is also partially reflected in the *kāend* of the Kāvīvalas in the grossness of certain aspects of *kāpālākṣaī tarjā pāñchālī* and other productions of the same type. Most of these verse-tales are now scarce,

suppressed by the law and never allowed to be reprinted, and it is not necessary to drag them out of their deserved obscurity, but there is evidence to show that from the end of the 18th to the middle of the 19th century this prolific literature, outrageous as it is to all taste, obtained considerable favour and currency. The earliest surviving specimen of these tales, however, belong to a period posterior to 1825 and do not therefore properly come within the scope of this

The most flourishing time of this literature falls outside our period

volume, although it is quite probable that it was preceded by a host of similar productions, belonging to an earlier date, which are now lost to us

Kālī Kṛṣṇa Dās's *Kāminī Kumār*, however, is placed by some at the end of the 18th century, but the earliest printed copy<sup>1</sup> that we have seen bears the date of 1836, while *Chandrikānta*, the next well-known piece cannot possibly belong to a much earlier date. Madan Mohan's *Bāsabdattā*, written in the same style but with finer power and greater delicacy, was first published in 1837. These were followed by a host of other works of the same type such as Tārāchāṇḍ Datta's *Manmatha Kābya* (1844), Munsi Eiādot's *Kuranga-bhānu* (1845), Umācharan Tribedi's *Madan Mādhurī* (1856), Banamālī Ghosāl's *Padmagandhā-upākhyān* (1864), Bīśvambhar Dās's *Rajānīkānta* (1870), Gobinda Śīl's *Hemlatā-Ratikānta* (1870 ?) all belonging to a period between 1840 and 1870. This would, therefore, amply indicate that between these dates there was an exuberant growth, if not recrudescence

<sup>1</sup>The copy in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library is wanting in the title-page. The date given in the text is the date given in a copy lent to me by a friend but which is now lost and is probably the date of the first edition, for there is a copy of Kālī Kṛṣṇa's other work, *Mānghanjan*, in the Sāhitya Pariṣat Library bearing 1856 (Śaka 1778) as the date apparently of the first edition. It is not unlikely therefore to hold that Kālī Kṛṣṇa's works belong to the period between 1836 and 1856.

of this reactionary literature helped probably by the re-printing of *Bidyāsundar* in 1836 and 1847

The miscellaneous poetry of this period is so unmanageably scattered and so diversified that it presents a difficult problem of selection and of satisfactory treatment. Besides the varieties of poems and songs already mentioned

Miscellaneous poets and songsters.

we have multifarious types of rural productions, mostly musical, like *Jārī gān*, *Gūjār gān*, *Hābā gīt*, *Nalā gīt*, *Kīrtan gān*, *Dhāp sangīt*, *Ghela gaṇ*, *Sūrī gān*, *Bānī sangīt*, *laryū gān*, specimens of which have survived in the mouths of the people although not always accessible in print. Much of this rural literature composed by inglorious and unknown poets, display, as all rural literature does, a touching quality and a natural poetic sensibility which is

interesting to note<sup>1</sup> but generally speaking much of it is not literature at all and must be rigidly excluded

Authors of *Pāñchālī* and *Fātrā*.

Among these purveyors of ephemeral stuff the authors of *Pāñchālī* and *Fātrā* must be mentioned, not because they are always worth mention but because their literary pretensions have rightly or wrongly always received recognition, as a peculiar form of indigenous literature which at one time had obtained great popularity

The origin of *Pāñchālī*-songs of the modern type cannot be definitely traced. Dinesh Chandra Sen, in his two works on Bengali Literature<sup>2</sup> puts forward the brilliant but hardly convincing conjecture that the

Origin of *Pāñchālī* songs.

Accounts of rural poets and their songs have from time to time appeared in various Bengali journals. For an interesting appreciation of rural literature in general see Rabindra Nāth Thākur *Grāmya Sāhitya* published in his volume on *Lok-Sāhitya*.

Baṅgabhaṅga O *Sāhitya* 2nd Ed., p. 231; *History of Bengali Language and Literature* p. 325

*Pāñchālī* (spelling the word as *Pāñchālī*) is ultimately connected with Panchāl or Kanauj, which he takes to be the birth-place of this kind of song. It may, however, be pointed out that there is no trace of *pāñchālī*-songs of the modern type (such as those popularised by Dāśarathi Rāy) in ancient literature, but that the word *Pāñchālī* it is well known, was used indiscriminately for all sorts of poetical composition which could be recited and which

possessed a religious theme. Thus

Ancient and modern  
types of *pāñchālī*  
must be distinguished

the *Pañāgalī Mahābhārat* or the *Mahābhārat* of Nityānanda Ghos is called *bhārat-pāñchālī* or simply *pāñchālī* in their respective *bhāratās*. Similarly *Kabī-kanhan Chandī* is designated throughout by its author as *pāñchālī* or *pāñchālī-prabandha*, and even in a work like *Jagannāth Mangal*, Gadādhara Mandal states that he is composing his work in the style of *pāñchālī*.<sup>1</sup> Thus we have, besides those mentioned above, *Śānī pāñchālī*, *Sasthī pāñchālī*, *Mansar pāñchālī* and in fact *pāñchālīs* written in praise of all the popular deities. These older compositions used to be recited and were therefore suitably arranged for *pālās* or sittings for recitation. But they were not *pāñchālīs* in the modern sense of the term and a distinction must be made between ancient and modern types. Another equally fanciful etymology of the term *pāñchālī* is given by deriving the word from *pā-chālī* or *padu-chālan* which is taken to indicate that the leader of such a party recited explains and sings his theme by moving about before the assembled audience, but this interpretation fails to explain the presence of nasal *ñ* in the word itself. It would seem, however, that the best

<sup>1</sup> We also get the word *pāñchālī chhanda* and unless the word *chhanda* means style of composition, it must be referred to a peculiar kind of metre.

explanation is that which connects *pāñchālī* with *nāchāḍī* (which was accompanied by dancing and singing) and which regards the term *pāñchalī* applied to the modern type of popular entertainment as connoting five (*pāñch*) essential things which must be present in all perfect kinds. What these five elements were cannot be exactly determined but singing (*gān*), music (*śāy-bāyāno*) recitation (*chhāḍū kūtāna*), poetical rivalry (*gāner laḍai*) and possibly dancing (*nāch*) more or less accompanied all *pāñchālīs* in later times.

As this form of entertainment has practically disappeared from modern Bengal it would be worth while to quote the following interesting description of a *pāñchālī* performance which lengthy as it is is still valuable as coming from one who himself was more or less connected with it and who must have also seen the performance of Dāsu Rāy himself.

নবমশ্রমীরে গোচরার্থ 'পাঁচালি' বস্তুটা কি একটু বুঝাইয়া বলা আবশ্যক। বহিঃ হাফ-আখড়াই ও দাঁড়া-কবির ন্যায় পাঁচালিতেও হুই দলে মল্লী-সংগ্রাম হইত কিন্তু উহাদের ন্যায় ইহাতে প্রকৃত প্রভাবে উত্তর অত্যুত্তর চলিত না। অর্থাৎ কবিতে যেমন এক দল পূর্ণপক্ষরূপে আপসী গান গাহিলে অপর দল উত্তর পক্ষরূপে তৎক্ষণাৎ তাহার অবাধ বিব্রা গান করেন, পাঁচালিতে তৎপরিবর্তে পূর্বাভ্যস্ত ছড়া ও গানের লড়াই হইত। যে দল অপেক্ষাকৃত উত্তমরূপে ছড়া কাটাইতে ও গান গাইতে পারিতেন, সেই দলের ভাগ্যেই ময়ত্রী দীপ্তিমতী হইয়া নিশান লাভ ঘটিত।

পাঁচালির প্রণালী এইরূপ হাফ আখড়াইএর ন্যায় তানপুর, বেহালা, ঢোল, মন্দিরা যোচং প্রভৃতি ইহার বাজ্য ইদানীং ঐক্যতান বাস্তব ফুটুটিদি উপকরণও তৎসঙ্গে থাকিত। হাফ আখড়াইএর ন্যায় বাস্তবও

লভাই হইত। সে বাগ্গেব নাম “সাজ-বাজানো”। সাজবাজনার পব “ঠাকুণ-বিষয়” বা “শ্রামা-বিষয়”। প্রথমেই শ্রামা-বিষয়ক একটি গান সকলে মিলিয়া গাইবাব পব কাটান্দাব উক্ত বিষয়েব ছড়া কাটাইতেন। অর্থাৎ ঐ কার্যেব উপযুক্ত কোনো এক ব্যক্তি উপযুক্ত অঙ্গ ভঙ্গীসহ সহিত, কখনো বা সহজ গলায়, কখনো বা এক প্রকাষ সুরেব সাহায্যে, কখনো বা পত্ন, কখনো বা গণ্ঠেব ছুট কথায় উচ্চসুরেব ছড়া বিন্যাস কবিতেন। কাটাইতে জানিলে তাহা শুনিয়া শ্রোতৃবর্গেব লোমাক্ষ হইত। যতঃ সুরবিব বচনা ও সুর-কাটান্দাব কর্তৃক যোজনা হইলে নানা বস উদ্দীপনাব সম্পূর্ণ সম্ভাবনা। ছড়া কাটানো হইলে সকলে মিলিয়া আবাব গান।

শ্রামাবিষয় প্রায় এক ছড়াতেই সমাপ্ত হইত, কিন্তু অনেক দলে দুই তিনটি ছড়া, সুরবাং তিন চাবিটি গানও হইত। সে যাহা হউক, ঐ দল শ্রামাবিষয় গাইয়া আপনাদেব যজ্ঞাদি সহিত উঠিয়া যাইতেন, প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বী দল আসবে নামিতেন। তাঁহাবাও ঐকপ শ্রামা বিষয় শেষ কবিয়া উঠিয়া গেলে পুনর্বার পূর্বদল আসিয়া সাজ বাজাইয়া সখীসম্বাদেব মহড়া গারুটি গাইয়া ছড়া কাটাইতেন। প্রথম ছড়াব পর গান আবাব দ্বিতীয় ছড়া ও তৃতীয় গান আবাব তৃতীয় ছড়া ও চতুর্থ গান এইরূপে কয়েকটি ছড়া ও কয়েকটি গানেব পব তাঁহাদেব প্রস্থান ও অপব দলেব প্রবেশ এবং ঐরূপে ছড়া গান হইয়া সখীসম্বাদ মিটিয়া যাইত। পবে বিবহেব বেলাও ঐ প্রণালী অবলম্বিত হইত।

একটি কথা বলিতে অবশিষ্ট। যখন যে দল যে প্রসঙ্গেব বিন্যাস হেতু আসবে নামিতেন, তখন তাঁহাবা যে কয়টা ছড়া ও গান কবিতেন, তাহাব সমুদয়েতেই সেই একই বিষয়েব আনুপূর্ব্বিক বর্ণনা থাকিত বিভিন্ন ছড়ায় যে বিভিন্ন বিষয়, তাহা নয়। অর্থাৎ একদল সখীসম্বাদেব সমগ্র প্রথম ছড়াব মাধুব, দ্বিতীয় ছড়াব মান, তৃতীয় ছড়ায় দান গাইতেন, তাহা হইবাব যো নাই সব ছড়াতে সেই একই প্রসঙ্গ বিবৃত কবিতেন।

Such is the *pāṁchālī* of the modern type. It is not known in what form it existed in earlier periods but the kind described began to be popular from the beginning of

the 19th century Dāsārathī Rāy was undoubtedly the greatest if not the earliest writer of the group but it is not beyond doubt whether it was he who first modified its earlier form and set up the new fashion. Before Dāsārathī we get the name of Gaṅgūrām Naṣkar who is sometimes regarded as the founder of this new type and Guro Dumbo who is taken by some to be a *pāñchālī*-writer and not a *kabīwālā* certainly flourished prior to Dāsārathī. But of these earlier mysterious figures nothing practically is known and no specimen of their production has come down to us. After Dāsū Rāy came Saṁnyāsī Chakrabartī, Nabīn Chakrabartī, Rasik Rāy, Thakur Dās Datta, Gobardhan Dās, Kesab Chāṇḍ, Namlāl, Jadu Ghos and a host of others who were more or less followers and imitators of Dāsārathī Rāy, their acknowledged head in the line. The latter, therefore, may not be unsuitably described as the great exponent and populariser if not the originator of *pāñchālī* in its modern form.

Thus although widely prevalent in the beginning of the 19th century we get no surviving specimen of *pāñchālī* belonging to the period between 1800 and 1825 with which this volume is directly concerned for

The most flourishing period of *pāñchālī* falls outside our present scope.

Dāsū Rāy himself was born in 1804 or 1805 and his imitators and followers belong to a period considerably later. Indeed, the most flourishing time of the modern *pāñchālī* was between 1825 and 1860 and therefore strictly speaking, it falls outside our period. It was a form of entertainment which began to be popular after the reputation of the *Kabīwālās* had been already on the decline, *pāñchālī* literature should, therefore, be more

fittingly taken up in its proper place in the treatment of the next period.

The same remarks with regard to chronology apply also

to *yātrā*, a species of popular amuse-

The *yātrā*

ment which was closely allied to

*lābī* and *pāñchālī* and prevalent

from a very early period but of which specimens have come down from comparatively recent times. The traditional

existence of *yātrās* is known to us from time immemorial and in Bharat's *Nāṭyaśāstra*, we hear of popular semi-

dramatic performances which have been generally regarded as the probable precursor of the popular *yātrās*, on the

one hand, and of the later Sanscrit

Its antiquity

dramatic literature on the other. In

Bhababhūti's *Mālatī-mādhava*,<sup>1</sup> the

word *yātrā* is used probably in the technical sense as well as in the general sense of a festivity. It cannot be

determined now whether the *yātrās* lineally descended without deviation from these earlier popular festive enter-

tainments of the operatic type, obtaining from the earliest times, or whether the later Sanscrit dramatic literature,

especially represented in such irregular types as the *Mahānāṭaka* or in the particular operatic types noted in all

works on Sanscrit dramaturgy, reacted upon it and greatly modified its form and spirit. But it may be noted that the

principal elements in the old *yātrā* seem to be of indigenous growth, peculiar to itself. In the first place, the *yātrā*

generally possessed a religious or

The principal elements in the *yātrā*, peculiar to itself

mythological theme, pointing to a

probable connexion with religious

festivities and ceremonies. In the

next place, although there always existed a dramatic

<sup>1</sup> *Mālatī mādhava* (Bomb Sans Series Ed.), p. 8



element, the song-element absolutely preponderated and the choral peculiarities threw into shade its mimetic qualities. And lastly, there were anomalous and grotesque elements in it which at once indicated a partial absence of the dramatic sense and materially retarded its growth. All these naturally stood in the way of taking the *yātrā* out of its operative structure and evolving the proper dramatic form and spirit but these at the same time helped to create by themselves a special nondescript species which cannot be confidently traced back to any known or recognised type of earlier times.

But the *yātrā* in however crude and undeveloped form, contained within itself the germs of a regular drama.

Although the principal theme was drawn from religion or mythology the realities of scenery and character were not absolutely ignored. It is true that there was hardly any action, and therefore there

Undeveloped and crude dramatic elements.

was little analysis or development of character. Even there was no scenic apparatus and all the details were left to the imagination of the audience. But all this was made up for by the gift of communicating life to the persons, the story, and the dialogues as well as by the rich operative qualities of the performance. With the modern stage-actor or dramatist, the *Yātrāvālā* never enters into comparison. He is working on a different scene, addressing a different audience and using different tools, colours and methods. Nevertheless within his limits, he could make his theme interesting and his characters lively by a natural gift of vivid representation. The makeshifts which he used were crude and taken in detail, his methods were faulty but he succeeded with all his rude resources in making the whole picture impressive and entertaining to his audience. It is therefore quite natural to find the

Yātrāwala making a skilful use of the common yet useful device of mingling the ludicrous and the pathetic in order to add a lively zest to the story. The serious and the comic set off each other and relieve the melodramatic strain of the whole performance. Again, every representation was concerned primarily with the gradual unfolding of a single plot, it never consisted of a disjointed "padding" of unconnected scenes and characters. Though the necessarily slow and elaborate transition of the whole performance, the story is made to stand out clear and alive. In the midst of all its surroundings and accessories, this was always kept in view in every regular *yātrā*. Speaking of the once famous *yātrā* of Paramā Adhikāī, a writer in the old series of *Bangalāśan* lays stress upon the fact that Paramā's *yātrā* could never be realised in isolated scenes or songs, inimitably done though they were, but the whole performance had to be witnessed from the beginning to the end. In later periods, mundane subjects and secular themes found their way into the religious *yātrā* and its monotony and seriousness were relieved by the introduction of lively, though conventional, interludes of a farcical nature conducted by characters like Nāīada or Madhu Mangal. All these indicated the enormous possibilities of the *yātrā* for gradually approximating towards the regular drama.

In course of time, the drama proper might have, in this way, slowly evolved itself from the indigenous *yātrā*, just in the same way as the English drama of the Renaissance evolved itself from the medieval mysteries and miracle-plays. There were, we have seen, inherent opportunities for such a course of development. The mimetic qualities of a *yātrā*, its realistic tendencies, its weaving out of a consistent plot, its

Why the amorphous *yātrā* did not develop into the regular drama

taste for a personal and lively dramatic story its mingling of the comic and the serious—all these traits more or less indicated that the amorphous *yātrā* might have passed into an indigenous form of the regular drama. But as a matter of fact it never had done so in its whole course. Indeed in ancient Bengali literature in spite of these and other advantages and of the presence of a pattern literature in Sanscrit, we have practically nothing by way of dramatic composition and the beginnings of the stage and the drama in the 19th century Bengal on the other hand had little connexion with the popular *yātrā*. We shall trace this point in detail in its proper place but we may note here that notwithstanding these opportunities other conditions were not favourable and there were serious obstacles, both external and internal which stood effectively in the way of such a development.

Although dissimilar in many respects the early *yātrā* shows in character and substance some resemblance to the

Contrast with the European medieval mystery and miracle-play

medieval mystery and miracle play and both had their origin in the popular representation of religious themes

But the conditions of growth and expansion differed considerably in the two cases

The intellectual readjustment which followed upon the Renaissance in Europe tended to the gradual secularisation of literature and the creation of a vigorous mundane vitality which could supply the basis of the new theatre. Free belief replaced imposed orthodoxy moral fervour replaced determined religious practices, energetic action and emotion

Influence of the Renaissance in developing European drama;

replaced external and mechanical discipline. With the disappearance of the bondage of medievalism, which had forbidden a life of nature and

worldly hopes, and with the appearance of the morally

and intellectually emancipated man of the Renaissance, life grew into a real thing. Vast and vital changes became manifest in the internal as well as the external world, in society, in politics, in religion, in the thoughts and aspirations of mankind. The drama was the natural outcome of this rich and manifold life, of this practical and positive movement which had placed literature on a purely human basis.

Bengal, on the other hand, never witnessed such a great movement, bringing in its train intellectual, moral and civic emancipation. There was no such universal awakening or enthusiasm. The external world had never possessed

any inherent interest to the naturally stoical and idealistic Hindu and no-  
but no such influence in ancient Bengal

thing happened which would take away this inbred apathy. His deep-rooted pessimism with regard to this world and unlimited optimism with regard to the next had produced a stoical resignation, an epicurean indifference and a mystic hope and faith which paralysed personal action, suppressed the growth of external life, and replaced originality by submission. In literature, therefore, which was overwhelmed by the crushing idea of a brooding fate (*adhṛstabād*) or of a divinity shaping our ends (*debālīlā*), religion was the only theme which flourished itself and song or recitative poem was the only vehicle which conveyed this religious preoccupation.

Influences which moulded national life and natural character in Bengal, not favourable to the development of the *yātū* into the drama

The prevalence of the *nyāsa* ideal and the natural prominence gives to *sāttvik* over the *rājāsik* qualities fostered an indifference to mundane activities and an absorption in supermundane affairs which materi-

ally hampered free expansion of art, science and literature of the nation. A majestic common sense, a rich feeling

for the concrete facts and forces of human nature and human life, a sense of enjoyment of the good things of earth, a passion of energy and action are traits which foster material civilisation and arts but which are antagonistic to Hindu ideas of placid contentment to the insensibility, amazement and ecstasy of religious devotion to the wistfulness and pathos of spiritual desire. Even in Sanskrit, complete secularisation of literature and development of poetry and drama could be possible in the more practical, positive and materially civilised age of a Vikramāditya or a Harṣavardhan. A national drama is not only the product of national glory but it is also a sure index to the sensitive and energetic strength of the external life of the nation itself.

But there were drawbacks inherent in the *yātrā* itself which stood in the way of its developing into a drama proper and the foremost of these drawbacks was the fact

The preponderance of the operatic and melodramatic elements in the *yātrā*, and its religious theme

that in the *yātrā*, the operatic and the melodramatic elements always preponderated over the dramatic. There was little dialogue still less action, but there was always an ex-

clusive predominance of songs in which even the dialogues were carried on and the whole action worked out. This overflow of the song-element, no doubt, redeemed much of the incongruities and anomalies of the *yātrā* but it also told seriously on the development of its dramatic elements by tending to destroy, in a flood of music and musical episodes, all considerations of dramatic probability and propriety. The peculiar mode of singing *chāmpās* or the *śakūjan padas* by 'paltan' or devising the peculiar variation of a *tukko* in the music of the *līriān* was utilised by every Yātrīkar for entrancing his audience. An expert and skilful Yātrīwala, however, did not always choose to walk

in this beaten way and we learn that in the *yātrā* of Paramā, already alluded to, there was less music and more dialogue—a device which was meant to infuse a dramatic interest in the story, yet it is well-known that the chief attraction of the *yātrā* consisted in its songs and that there was nothing more delightful than Paramā's famous *tokko* whose musical quality no other *yātrāwālā* is said to have ever surpassed. A very considerable portion of ancient Bengali literature consisted of songs and of poems which could be recited or chanted and the *yātrā* in its peculiar lyric quality, strictly conformed to this widely prevalent lyric propensity. The influences which moulded national life and national characteristics helped rather than checked this universal tendency and there was absolutely nothing which could lift the *yātrā* out of its religious envelopment or its musical structure.

The *yātrā*, again, began to be extremely popular from a literary period which powerfully contributed to its lyric and religious tendencies. The earliest reference to

emphasised and encouraged by the Baisnab literature, lyric and mystic in quality

the *yātrā* probably dates from the Baisnab era. But Baisnabism, if it humanised literature to a certain extent, hardly ever secularised it. It only intensified the religious ardour of the people

and brought with it a mass of lyric and mystic literature which was not only alien in its essence to the drama but which also encouraged the musical, melodramatic and religious predilections of the *yātrā*. The Baisnab poets, no doubt, brought new ideas and novel modes of art but it is hardly correct to designate the Baisnab era as the Renaissance period of Bengal.<sup>1</sup> It would be out of place

<sup>1</sup> Sūradācharan Mitrā, in *Sāhitya*, 1815 B. S.

to discuss this point here in detail but it may be pointed out that at least in the literary sphere Baiṣṇabism was not a universal movement and its influence on contemporary and subsequent literature was never wide. In estimating this influence on the literature of the 17th and 18th centuries we must guard against the error of regarding it in the magnifying perspective in which we view it in the 19th or the 20th century, in which this influence has been very marked. Baiṣṇabism never disturbed seriously the uninterrupted course of Bengali literature from the earliest time down to the 18th century. Side by side with Baiṣṇab songs and lyrics flourished the traditional *chandi poems*, *manasār gān* *dharmā māṅgal*, *śībāyan* which in form and spirit bear little kinship with Baiṣṇab productions and which affiliates itself with the earlier and later poetical literature of Bengal. Even a century later we find the same tradition carried on in the *Padmāvatī* of Ālāol, *Durgāpañcharātri* of Jagat Rām Śībāyan of Rāmadāsar, *Anandā māṅgal* of Bhārat-chandra, *Gaiṅgābhakti-taraṅgiṇī* of Durgā Prasād—all of which show little direct influence of Baiṣṇab ideas or Baiṣṇab forms of art. The socio-ethical ideas of Baiṣṇabism no doubt, inaugurated a new line of culture, but its cosmopolitanism its ideal of universal love and its theory of emotional realisation was antagonistic to the development of nationality or of national ideas. A spark of new life animated the social organism but this new born religious enthusiasm hardly permitted its votaries to stand and cast a look around them—it carried them off their feet in a flood of devotional ecstasy, in a flood of lyric idealism. Instead of a full blooded dramatic literature, it gave us a mass of resplendent religious-amatory lyrics.

The influence of Baiṣṇabism therefore was hardly favourable to the development of the inherent dramatic elements

in the *yātrā*, on the other hand, it cherished its musical peculiarities, developed its melodramatic tendency, and emphasised its religious predilections. Indeed, we find the

The *yātrā* in the  
Baisnab era, influence  
of Baisnab ideas

Baisnabs utilising the popular

*yātrā* as a means of representing *kṛṣṇa-līlā* and diffusing its novel ideas. The earliest *yātrā* of which we have any mention relate to such themes and was known technically and universally as the *Kṛṣṇa-yātrā*. In early Bengali literature prior to Chaitanya, no doubt, there prevailed songs relating to Śaiva and Śākta cults and it is probable that with these prevailed also *Śība-yātrā* and *Chandī-yātrā*, traces of which we find even in 18th century, and probably also *Rām-yātrā* which had, however, no kinship with the spectacular *Rām-līlā* prevalent in the upper provinces. It is extremely difficult, in the absence of data, to speak confidently on the subject but it seems that in course of time with the advent of Baisnab ideas, *Kṛṣṇa-yātrā* overshadowed all other kinds and became absolutely supreme. The generic name of this *yātrā* was *Kālīya-daman yātrā* which, however, in spite of its name, related not only to this particular feat of Kṛṣṇa but included also *dān*, *mān*, *māthuri* and other well-known *līlās*. These *yātrās* were preceded, as the *Kīrtan* of the Baisnabs were (*taluchita gaurachandra*), by the recitation or singing of a *gaura-chandī* a term which unmistakably connects it with Gaurachandra or Chaitanya. In *Chaitanya-mangal* and *Chaitanya-bhāgabat*<sup>1</sup> mention is made of a *yātrā*-festivity organised by Chaitanya himself in the house of Chandrasekhari Āchāryya. The history of

<sup>1</sup> *Chaitanya bhāgabat*, ed. Atulkrṣṇa Gosvāmī, pp. 283-291. The expression used is অাজি কবিবাঙ নৃত্য অঙ্কন বিষয়, from which as well as from the account given, it is not clear whether it was a *yātrā* which was performed on this occasion or whether it was a regular sanscrit drama (such as the Baisnab plays like *Jagannātha ballabha*, *Dānakeli kaumudī* or *Vidagdha mādhyava* in Bengali version) which was enacted on this occasion.



Bengali *yātrā*, therefore, is closely connected with that of Baiṣṇab literature in general and it would not be incorrect to say that Baiṣṇabism supplied the *yātrā* with themes for several centuries and confirmed, if it did not directly give it its operative and melodramatic qualities.

These qualities persisted practically throughout its whole history. But in course of time we find the *yātrā*, in spite of the drawback already noted gradually developing its crude dramatic elements. After the Baiṣṇab era the earliest well known *Yātrāwālā* was

New elements in the *yātrā* finding its way into it in later periods.

Paramānanda Adhikārī, a native of Birbhūm who flourished probably in the 16th century and carried on the

tradition of *Kāliya-daman yātrā*. There was a greater amount of acting and dialogues in this *yātrā* although song melodrama and Baiṣṇab themes were not altogether discarded. The tradition was continued by Sudāma Adhikārī and Lochan Adhikārī the latter specially excelling in the delineation of *Akrura Sañbhūd* and *Nimāi Saṅgyā*—themes which possessed greater human interest than the conventional *dām, mān, wāṭhan* of Śrīkrṣṇa. Gobinda Adhikārī of Kṛṣṇanagar Pītūnbar Adhikārī of Kātwa and Kālāchand Pūl of Bikrampur, Dacca were comparatively recent exponents of the same *Kṛṣṇa yātrā*. But the other species—*Bām Yātrā, Cāṇḍī Yātrā, Maṅsar Bhāsān Yātrā*—were not totally extinct. Guruprasād Ballabh, of Farā-dāngā and Lausen Budal of Burdwan gained considerable reputation in *Cāṇḍī Yātrā* and *Maṅsar Bhāsān Yātrā*, respectively, while *Bām Yātrā* obtained celebrity in the hands of Premchānd Adhikārī, Ananda Adhikārī and Jayachandra Adhikārī of Pātāihātā. No specimen except a few scattered songs, has been preserved of these earlier *Yātrāwālās*.

Such is the history of the *yātrā* up to the beginning of the 19th century. After these professional *yātrās*, come varieties of modern *yātrās*, chiefly

The *yātrā* in the beginning of the 19th century

amateur parties (*sakher dal*), in which, in spite of their profusion of instrumental and vocal music, drama-

tic ideas and methods were slowly evolving themselves. Beltalā Emdedān Yātrā or the Yātrā of Gopāl Ude may be cited as instances. In imitation of prologues in Sanskrit drama, we have, in these, farcical introduction as well as interlude in which laughable, though often vulgar, characters like Kālūā Bhulūā, methai and methrāni began to figure. Again, we have here for the general theme not *Kṛṣṇa-līlā* as in *Kālīya-daman yātrā* or even *Chandī-līlā*, *Rām-līlā* or *Mansū*, *Kathū* but essentially secular themes of mythology or fiction such as Nala-damayanti or Bidyā-sundar began to be prominent, and later on with the degeneration of the *yātrā* in tone, temper and style, Bidyā-sundar alone became the prevalent theme.

The existing specimens of the *yātrās* all belong to this late period in its history. Although the *yātrā* had been extensively popular from the earliest times or even from the Baisnab era down to the middle of the 19th century, the earlier specimens have not been preserved. We know nothing of these earlier Yātrāwalas and their productions,

excepting some general accounts which

No earlier specimens preserved.

we incidentally get here and there

Even all the best known Yātrāwalas of the 19th century, whose productions have, in a more or less complete form, come down to us, belong to a comparatively recent time, to the period between 1825 and 1850. The Yātrāwalas, flourishing between 1800 and 1825, some of whom have been already mentioned, are however known

by name and reputation and even all the names are only known. This form of literature like the production of the Kabi-walas was extemporised and was meant to of tribute to the transient pleasure of its audience, and con

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The belong to a  
men between 1825  
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and

much of it was of the ephemeral type. The remarks already made on this aspect of the Kabi-song apply with equal force to the case of the *yātrā* and, like the Kabi songs, it

enerated considerably in style and temper. No de  
tempt was ever made to preserve them in print and much  
att this literature is now lost. Of the few well known  
of rāwālas however, whose work has been more or less  
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podied in print, Kṛṣṇa Kamal Bhaṭṭācārya was born  
em 1810, Gopāl Ujje about 1819 and Gobinda Adhikārī,  
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se dates are not exactly known, was probably a con  
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porary of both these. All these writers therefore fall  
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nde the scope of this volume. It was about this time  
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little later that the *yātrā* had already begun to dege  
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all these old forms of literature as out  
of date and contemptible. With the  
spread of these new ideas and new  
literary methods, a regular stage was  
gradually established and dramas  
written in imitation of European

dels, tolled the death knell of the old *yātrā* which still  
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gered but never found the same place in popular favour  
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is not surprising therefore that in the preface to his  
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nabati, one of the earliest Bengali dramas written  
Ra  
this new stage Rāmnārāyan Tarkaratna, himself an  
for  
hodox pundit, speaks in contemptuous terms of the  
ort

popular *yātrā* and votes in favour of the new drama based on Sanscrit and English models. The history of these latter-day *Yātrāwālas*, of this phase in the development of the *yātrā* and of its connexion with the new drama will, therefore, be traced in its proper place in the next volume.

## APPENDIX I

[See p 10 foot note p 119 foot note 3]

### OLD BENGALI PROSE

Though prose is more obviously natural to man in conversation it is only after considerable experience that he realises its utility as a medium of formal writing

*Late growth of prose.* Bengali Literature is no exception to this rather commonplace 'verse-first-prose-afterwards' adage of literary history. Our forefathers from the very earliest times, no doubt, spoke in prose but it is possible to use prose without knowing or thinking about it, and the late development of prose-writing in Bengali follows generally the order of development in almost all languages. Indeed the achievement of early Bengali prose is not only very late but speaking generally it amounts to almost nothing such achievement as there is, for several centuries, is in verse. Poetry attained a considerable degree of maturity while we have nothing

*Predominance of verse* but a mere haphing of prose. This preponderance of one form of writing partially explains and is explained by the extreme poverty of the other but it is more than a case of preponderance, it is one of monopoly. It may almost be said that there is not a single piece of spirited prose of the profane kind in Bengali from the earliest times to the early beginnings of the 19th century whatever exists of other kinds is again late, scanty and for the most part frankly unsatisfactory

Not only the bulk of early prose literature is late and scanty but it is not yet quite reasonably clear that what

has come down exemplifies very fairly the whole upon which we may fully form an estimate. Much of early Bengali prose, like its verse, is lost much again yet remains to be unearthed. The only

Difficulties in the way  
of our study

specimen of very early prose which probably goes beyond the 16th century

is to be found in the few doubtful passages interspersed in the verses *Śūnya Purāṇ* and perhaps in the apocryphal work attributed to Chandidās. Other prose specimens, mostly cryptic and mystical writings of the Sahajivā sect, together with a little good prose-writing of other kinds, may all be taken to be productions of late 18th century, none of them certainly going beyond the 17th. Any attempt to estimate the development attained by old Bengali prose, as shown by these scanty remains, must of necessity be somewhat superficial and incomplete, not only in view of the fragmentary nature of much of these writings but also because of the difficulties of chronology. Most of these manuscripts are undated and show considerable differences of readings. Nature of the script and general style of composition are at best unsafe guides, not only in themselves, but also because the one is not yet a matter of systematic study while the characteristic specimens of the other in different periods are not yet available. Even when the manuscripts are dated, the exact relation of the manuscript to the date of composition it is almost impossible to determine. These difficulties are multiplied again by the presence of divergent readings in different manuscripts of the same work. It is needless to say that unless we can stand upon firm and sure ground in matters of chronology, not to speak of insufficiency of materials to go upon, we can hardly expect to form a correct and critical estimate of our subject of study and all our attempts in this direction are at best nothing more than tentative.

The earliest specimen of Bengali prose is supposed to be the short passages in Rāmāi (or Rāmāi) Paṇḍit's *Śāmya Purāṇ*, the manuscript of which is placed by its editor (Sāhitya Pariṣat edition) in the 17th century although the so-called

prose passages if not the verse, reveal a much earlier and more antique form of diction. If the language of the

recently published *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Ārtana* belongs to the early part of the 14th century <sup>1</sup> we can safely assume that the prose of *Śāmya Purāṇ* must have had its origin in a somewhat earlier age and the supposition is not unlikely that the passages as we have them may contain traces of the original writings of Rāmāi Paṇḍit going back to at least 13th century A D <sup>2</sup> varied and modified it may be by later scribal and other interferences. It would be interesting to examine these ancient specimens critically but such examination is beset with difficulties not only on account of the frankly unintelligible vocabulary and crabbed syntax considerable corruption of the text rightly commented

upon by many a critic, but also because of the exclusive and esoteric doctrines they embody, which seem to create a language of their own whose meaning is all but lost to us. Here is a portion of the celebrated passage on বারমাসি

কোন মাসে কোন রাসি। চৈত্র মাসে মীনরাসি। হে কালিন্দি  
অল বার তাই বার আদিত। হুখ পাতি লহ শেবকর অৰ্থ মুগ্ধপানি।  
শেবক হুখ সুখি আননি বীনাং করি। শুক পণ্ডিত দেউল্যা দানপতি।  
সাহস্র ভোক্তা আননি দম্যাপী পতি আইতি পাতন বাএন হুখারি ছার  
পাল তাওসী ভাতারীশাল রাবদুত কোদি কোটাল পরে হুখ মুক্তি  
এহি দেউলে পড়িব অক্ষ অক্ষকর। দাতার দানপতির বিয় আর নাশ।

<sup>1</sup> Preface to *Kṛṣṇāhrtana*, H. P. Bhattacharya in *Calcutta Review* pp. 392-93

H. P. Bhattacharya op. cit. p. 394.

কোন মাসে কোন বাসি। বৈশাখ মাস মেস বাসি। হে বসন্তদেব  
বাব ভাই বাব আদিও হাথ পাতি লেহ সেবকব পুঙ্গপানি। সেবক  
হব সুখি আমনি বামাং করি। গুরু পণ্ডিত দেউশা দানপতি  
মাংসুব ভোক্তা আমনি সন্ন্যাসী ( ১ সন্ন্যাসী ) গতি জাতি গাএন  
বাএন হুআবি হুআবপান ভাণবী ভাণবপান বাহুদূত কোনি  
কোটান পাবেক সুখ মুকতি। এহি দেউশা পড়িব ভাস্ত্র ভাস্ত্রাব।  
দাতা দানপতিব বিয় জাব নাস। কোন মাস কোন বাসি। বৈশাখ  
গেনে জেট মাসে এস বাসি।

and so forth through all the months of the year in the same strain

On first reading this fantastic piece of apparently unrhymical writing would hardly seem to be prose at all and it has been doubted if it is prose or verse or none, or a curious admixture of the two. But a careful study will make it clear that it is not verse in any sense but probably prose, although it may be prose of a kind unfamiliar

Close relation of prose and verse in old Bengali literature  
to us, and that it has a distinct rhythm of its own. When carefully examined, this and other passages, if the text is correct, will reveal that here

for the first time there is a perception, however faint, of the existence of distinct styles of prose and verse, although the instruments of the two harmonies may not have been very clearly differentiated.<sup>1</sup> In order to understand the

<sup>1</sup> All these speculations are based on the assumption that what the passages embody is really prose. They have been always taken as such, but my own suspicion is that they are really verse-lines, perhaps imperfectly recorded fragments, not properly examined or shifted with care when the text was edited and printed from the original MSS. Unfortunately I had no access to the original manuscript, in the possession of the editor, upon which the text is chiefly based, and had to depend entirely upon the *Sāhitya Pariṣat* edition which is anything but what scientific scholarship would desire. There is no attempt to render



nature of this passage we must bear in mind that the connexion between old Bengali verse and old Bengali prose was extraordinarily close. There was a time indeed, when writers of this literature hardly ever recognised the separate existence of prose as a vehicle of expression, classifying it, in theory as a species of poetry itself and calling it *শব্দ-মাত্র* or prose-metre and in practice making their prose, with alliteration, balanced accent, and other devices look as much like their own verse as possible. It is a well known fact that much of this prose like the passage just quoted interspersed in the midst of verse, was consciously adapted not only to read like verses but to be sung or chanted after the manner of *Kathakas* or rhapsodists. It is curious to note in this connexion that in many of these prose pieces we find the *dhakṣiṇā* or signature of their respective authors in the same way as we find them in their poetical compositions.

Anyone, studying the passage already quoted and those that follow even with moderate attention, will have no difficulty in agreeing to what has been said as to the close relation between early prose and verse. Not only the condensed mode and ordonnance of verse is followed here but the symmetry of the lines turns of phrases peculiar

the passages intelligible in spite of the addition of a very imperfect glossary. The text is suspiciously corrupt and the editor himself acknowledges that he had no time to collate the three manuscripts with the published text but that he had got it done by his pundits. There is nowhere any indication of variations of readings given by the different manuscripts utilised, nor any attempt even to determine the correct reading. This is a most strange fact and renders the edition entirely valueless to a scientific student. The *Śāstra Parīkṣā* as it stands now is an extremely difficult book to edit with all its indispensable critical apparatus and the *Sāhitya Parīkṣā* must be praised for its boldness in undertaking to reprint it; but one would wish that the scholarship displayed in bringing out this edition had been equal to the boldness of this difficult undertaking.

to verse, the iamb-like repetition of sentences, the very frequent intrusion of half-staves or full verse-lines (like দাতাব দানপতিব দি  
জাব নাস or এহি দেউলে পড়িব অশ  
জম্বাকাব) capable of accurate scan-  
sion, occasional occurrence of end-rhymes, and lastly, the muffled under-hum of verse-rhythm throughout - all indicate that the passage, in its close approach to the rhythm and tune of poetry, was meant, if it is prose at all, to be chanted with the verses to which it was only an appendage. Here is another passage, more intelligible and more varied, in which the characteristics already indicated are more prominent

হে জয়সজ্জ হে বিজয়সজ্জ তুঙ্গি সংখ হইএ চিবাঁই। তুঙ্গাব জলে  
স্তান কবেন শ্রীবর্ষ গোসাঞি। অভিসেক জলে স্তান মনখিব কৈসের  
পাবন সহিতেব পাবন সচল অচল সৃষ্টি সৃজিলেন গোসাঞি ৩ক৩৭২৭।  
স্বপ্নেব কোদাল রূপাব ঘাট। মহাদেব কুদালেন স্বর্গ নর্ও পাতাল।  
জটােব কূলে পেলেন নীব সে নীব লইয়া দসমন্ত গতি বাখানি। একা  
হইলেন পণ্ডিত বিষ্টু হইলেন কন্নি মহাদেব মেলি কবেন জলপাবন।  
মূলপাবন স্থলপাবন গোষ্ঠীপাবন ছায়াপাবন পণ্ডিতপাবন উত্তর দখিন পূব  
পশ্চিম পাবন। জীওপাবন। কায়াপাবন মুণ্ডপাবন বড়পাবন। স্বপ্নর  
পুঙ্খনি রূপাব ঘাট এহি স্থল জলে স্তান কবেন শ্রীদেব কবতােব। আদপতি  
অনাদপতি কবির সাব। এহি স্থল পাটে ধর্মাব আগুসাব। অনুমথ  
বেল পলাস মোউলর পাত। সিনান কবেন পবতু তিদসব নাথ।  
স্তান সন্ধ্যা ( ? সন্ধ্যা ) গোসাঞিব চাম্পান দিব ঘাট ( ? )। ধবল সিংহাসন  
গোসাঞর ধবল পাট। উরিণেন গোসাঞি ঝলমল করিএ কঙ্কে নবগুন  
পৈতা।

It will be noticed that in this passage there are lines at the beginning and at the end, which form distinct couplets having regular end-rhymes. The opposite tendency of having rhythmic prose lines in the midst of verse will be

exemplified in the lines on অধিবাস to be found at p 81 of the Sahitya Parishat edition. The following, again, is a curious illustration of mixed prosaic poetic style

কেহ নাটি কাটে কেহ পাথর চাঁছে হাতী মাকুমর পটা কাটিয়া  
ছিড়িয়া নাপিকা অধিকা সভ হাতে হইল পোতা। রাত্তি পাথর চারি  
পাতি কর কতে হল মূষ মূষার আড়া। কাকুন বাধিয়া মেলে করিল  
কাট ভাল (১ কাচ ভাল)। মগলে ফটকের খাম লাগে চন্দন নারন।  
আর সাত ডকে (১) লাগিল গজান। ইলা মগলে বগন সভা করে।  
বেলাল পাটর গাটী মূষার কড়ি লাগে কপার বাধারি ছিটিকে তবির  
উপরে বেলাল পাটর গাটী সভা করে ঘোড়ি বলে ধরে ধর। মউর  
পুঙ্খ ছাটনি বর্ষর ঘর। বেলাল পাটর গাটী পিড়াম সভা করে।  
মূষার কলস তধি উড়এ নেওর ধুতি। মূষার কলস নেওর পতাকা  
হিল মে তুলিয়া ঘুই মূর্ছি হএ কানিতা বিনাভর আনাইল অস্ত্রোখে।  
ত্রিধর্ম চরণগনে ত্রিভুত রানাই মনে হয় কবি অন্যতর (১ অন্যতর)  
মাস। অর্চনা করিলা তাব পূজ নিয়মনে যদি হল ভবনবো পার।

These passages it must be admitted are not fine literary specimens by themselves but to a student of literary history their formal import

What these passages illustrate. and is very great. Thus illustrate, if not anything else at least the fact

that prose has not yet fully emerged itself and come into prominence, at that particular stage as a distinct mode of writing although there is at the same time a faint indication of such understanding in the literary mind. This is not what we understand by prose-poetry or poetical prose

but the instruments of the two harmonies are so nearly identical that the products slide and grade off into one another very easily and undistin-

guishably. This may be called the beginning of prose—a curious literary phenomenon of which not many instances

may be found in the early prose of other languages and which leaves little doubt as to the value and relative antiquity of the specimens of question

Prose evolving out of poetry We see here the very early stages in the processes by which prose is slowly evolving itself out of poetry and asserting its right to recognition as a medium of expression altogether distinct from verse. It is a matter of regret, however, that we cannot trace other stages in this process as we do not possess any documents of prose-writing of this or subsequent periods until we came to the 16th century.

One of the curious effects of the intermixture of prosaic and poetic styles is the idea, however imperfect, of a rhythmic arrangement in these prose passages. Of course, verse and prose rhythms have entirely

Rhythmic effect different values and the harmony of the one is not always desirable in the other yet, if it is not rash to dogmatise in the absence of any but slight and scatty knowledge of the phonetics of early Bengali, we cannot mistake the fine effect of symphonic arrangement (partly due to the presence of versicles) which the lines, perhaps unconsciously, attain. Of actual syntax there may not be much nor is there any attempt at balance of phrase or periodic sentence-framing, although there is certainly a knowledge of the value of short and long sentences but the very fact that the passages were meant as appendages to verse and composed with the not unlikely object of being sung gives them a peculiar rhythmic effect, rudimentary yet not childish, which it is impossible to ignore.

The apocryphal prose piece, *Charitya Rūpa Prāpti* passing under the great name of Chanḍīdās does not, from our point of view, require any special examination. The following passage .

*Charitya Rūpa Prāpti*,  
attributed to Chanḍī-  
dās

চৈতন্যের রা চ অধরশ লাড়ি। রা অকরে রাগ লাড়ি। চ অকরে চেতন লাড়ি। র এতে চ মিশিল রা এতে বসিল। ইবে এক অঙ্গ লাড়ি। বাগ যতি। লাড়ির নাম সুধা। সেই লাড়ি দাতাইল প্রকার।

will sufficiently indicate the same admixture of prose and verse-forms—and indeed we have a reference in the *Padakalpataru* to গণপঞ্চরস রচনা of Chandīdās but the sentences are shorter and the vocables more modern. The manuscript is dated 1674 and it is probable that the language does not go much earlier than that date. The frigid drip of doctrinaire talk—for it professes to explain *tāntrik* theories in riddle like language and brief aphoristic sentences almost always dropping the verb and seldom running beyond three or four words at a time—does not seem to allow much scope for the prose either to run fluently or to evince any remarkable literary aptitudes.

This bare dry fatiguing aphoristic manner is illustrated by a body of so-called philosophic writings relating to the Sahajiyā cult, which belong in all probability to the 17th and the 18th centuries. The first work that calls for mention in this group is the curious manuscript called *Dekakaṇṭhaka*, attributed to Narottama Ṭhākura the text of which was published in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrilā* (1904 no 1 pp 39-46). The date of the oldest manuscript is 1603 Śaka (1681 A D) and this date as well as the similarity of style and manner would place the work in the age in which the last mentioned Chandīdās apocrypha was written. The text of this manuscript, however, seems to be almost identical (making due allowance to trifling scribal and other variations) with that of *Ātma-yigñāśā*, ascribed to Kṛṣṇānāṣa (*Sāhitya Pariṣat* manuscript

no 1474) <sup>1</sup> The vexed question of authorship or the sources of the works in question, their origin in an earlier *Svañūpa-kalpataṛu*, does not concern us here in the least, nor have we anything to do with their literary associations with the doctrines, real or imaginary, of the Sahajiyā cult and its mystical sublimation, what concerns us most is that Naiottama, if Naiottama he was, or Kṛṣṇadās, if Kṛṣṇadās there was, wrote in a severely scholastic manner, bare, dry and aphoristic abounding in technicalities, which may be suited for doctrinal exposition but which hardly shows any attempt, conscious or unconscious, at producing either style or rhythm. Here is a characteristic specimen from the beginning of *Dehak idcha*, with the corresponding additions and variations in brackets from the text of *Ātma-jyṅāsā* <sup>2</sup>

শ্রীশ্রীবাধাক্ষায় নমঃ [ শ্রীশ্রীবাধাক্ষয় ] । [ অথো আপ্তজিগাসা । ]  
 তুমি কে । [ আমি কে । ] আজি জীব [ জিব ] । তুমি কোন জীব  
 [ কোন জিব ] । আমি তটন্ত জিব ॥ থাকেন [ থাক ] কোথা [ কথা ]  
 ভাঙে । ভাঙ কীকপে [ কিকপে ] হইল । তও [ তৰ্ত্ত ] বস্ত [ বস্ততে ]  
 হৈতে [ হৈল ] । তও বস্ত কি কি [ কি কি তৰ্ত্তবস্ত ] । পঞ্চ [ পঞ্চভূ ]  
 আত্মা । একাদশেজ [ একাদশ ইঞ্জি ] । ছয় বিপু ইচ্ছা [ জ্ঞান ] এই  
 সকল য়েক [ এক ] যোগে [ জোগে হৈল ] ভাঙ হৈল । পঞ্চাত্মা কে  
 [ পঞ্চভূআত্মা কাথে বলি ] । প্রিথিবী আপ তেজঃ বাউ আকাশ  
 [ আপু তেজ বাউ বর্জ আকাশ এই পঞ্চ ] ॥ একাদশীজ কে কে  
 [ একাদশ ইঞ্জি(য়) না(য়) কি ] । কন্ম ইঞ্জ পাঁচ [ কন্ম পঞ্চ ইঞ্জি ] ।  
 জ্ঞানীজ পাঁচ [ জ্ঞান পঞ্চ ইঞ্জি ] । আববন এক [ মন এই একাদশ  
 ইঞ্জি ] ।

<sup>1</sup> See *Sāhitya Pariṣat Patrikā*, 1306, no 1, p 49 and no 4, p 327, *ibid* 1305, p 197, *ibid*, 1304, no 4, p 302

<sup>2</sup> The text of *Ātma-jyṅāsā* here follows that of the *Sāhitya Pariṣat* manuscript (no 1474) Other manuscripts noticed in the *Patrikā* (referred to in footnote 1) give slightly different readings

In the same strain is the following from the *Kārikā* supposed to be written by Rūpa Gosvāmī, which is noticed in the *Bāṇḍaḥ* 1289 B S (p 369) <sup>1</sup>

ত্রিপ্রীতাবিনোদ অর। অথ বচনির্ঘর। প্রথম ত্রিকের গুণনির্ঘর।  
 শব্দগুণ রসগুণ রসগুণ স্পর্শগুণ এই পাঁচগুণ। এই পঞ্চগুণ  
 ত্রিযতী রাধিকাতোও বসে। শব্দগুণ কর্ণে রসগুণ নাশিতে রূপগুণ নেত্রে  
 রসগুণ অবশ্যে ও স্পর্শগুণ অঙ্গে। এই পঞ্চগুণে পূর্ণরাসেব উদয়।  
 পূর্ণরাসের মূল হই। হঠাৎ প্রবণ ও অকস্মৎ মর্শন।

There are several other works *Āśraya-Nirṇaya* <sup>2</sup> *Ātma-*  
*Ārūpaṇa* <sup>3</sup> *Śaśāra-bhāṣana* <sup>4</sup> *Rāga-*  
*mayī lāṇa* <sup>5</sup> much later productions  
 Other works but all attributed after the ancient manner of lumping all

The text as given here apparently modernised in spelling follows that given in *Bāṇḍaḥ* and quoted also by Dīnesh Chandra Sen in his *Brūya Bhāṣā O Sāhitya* 2nd Ed p. 629. The text as quoted above occurs also in a manuscript called *রাগ-মালা* by Narottama Dāsa, as follows অথ উদয়ন পঞ্চগুণ নির্ঘর।  
 রাধিকাতো গুণনির্ঘর। শব্দ শব্দ রস রস ও স্পর্শ এক পঞ্চবিধ এবং রাধিকাতো  
 পঞ্চবিধ কর্ণে শব্দগুণ ১। নেত্রে রূপগুণ ২। নাশিতে রসগুণ ৩। অঙ্গের রসগুণ ৪।  
 অঙ্গে স্পর্শগুণ ৫। etc

See *Patricā*, 1306, no 3, p. 251 also p. 67

There are two manuscripts of this work in the *Sāhitya Pariṣat* (nos. 831 and 1471) The following quotation is taken from earlier manuscript no. 1471 (dated 1247 B S) See also notice of this work in *Patricā* 1304, no 4, p. 303 in which mention is also made of another manuscript dated 1098 B S. See also *Patricā* 1308, p. 53 where this work is attributed to Narottama.

*Sāhitya Pariṣat* manuscript no. 333 (dated 1247 B S) See also *Patricā* 1304, no. 4 p. 802 (where the date of the manuscript noticed is 1218 B.S.) and *ibid* 1306, no. 1 p. 48.

*Patricā*, 1306 no 1 p. 80; *ibid*, 1304 no. 6 pp. 343-4 (manuscript dated 1081 B S); *ibid* 1306, no. 1 p. 79 (manuscripts dated 1184 and 1248 B.S.)

*Patricā*, 1304, no 4 pp. 333-34; *ibid*, 1306, p. 66. See *Patricā* 1308, pp. 40-41 where passages are quoted from other prose works *c c* *Sarāṅgīlīlā* and *Sudhanāśraya*.

anonyma upon a single apocryphal figure of traditional repute, to Kṛṣṇadās, which exhibit the same characteristic disjointed style, peculiar to this kind of 17th and 18th century writings. It is needless to multiply quotations but one or two short specimens would not be quite out of place.

অথ ব্রজে পঞ্চভাব ॥ সাস্ত ১ দাস্ত ২ সখ্য ৩ বাৎস্ত্য ৪ মধুব ৫  
 এই পঞ্চভাব। সাস্তেব পাত্র কে। সনকাদি  
 Specimens মুনীগণ। গুণ কি নির্ভাণ্ডন। দাস্তেব পাত্র

সৈন্ত্যে হনুমান ঠাকুব। মাধুৰ্য্যে এজে সর্বে এবং গোপীগন। গুণ কি সেবা। সখ্যেব পাত্র কে। ঐন্দ্র্যে অর্জুন ঠাকুব। মাধুৰ্য্যে শ্রীদাম স্তদামাদি। গুণ কি সনতাণ্ডন। বাৎস্ত্যেব পাত্র কে ॥ বৈসর্গ্যে বসুদেব দ্বৈবকি ॥ মাধুৰ্য্যে নন্দ জমোদা। গুণ কি সনতাণ্ডন। মধুব ভাবেব পাত্র শ্রীরাধিকা এবং এজাপনা সকল ॥ গুণ কি শ্রদ্ধাব। ধাম চাবি প্রকাব। শ্রীবৃন্দাবন ১ গৌলক ২ মথুরা ৩ দ্বারকা ৪। শ্রীবৃন্দাবনেব পাত্র শ্রীনন্দনন্দন। গৌলকে স্বয়ং ভগবান। মথুরায় বাসুদেব। দ্বারকায় নারায়ণ ॥ ভাব দুই প্রকাব। ভাব মহাভাব। ভাবেব পাত্র গোপীগন ॥ মহাভাবেব পাত্র শ্রীমতি বাদীকা। ভাব পবকিয়া। কোন পবকিয়া। উর্জ্জল পবকিয়া। কোন উর্জ্জল। বসোর্জ্জল। কোন বস প্রেমবস। কোন প্রেম। বিলাস প্রেম। কোন বিলাস। মধুব বিলাস। কোন মধুর। জুগল মধুব। কোন জুগল। বাধাকৃষ্ণ। (আশ্রয় নির্ণয় বা ভজন নির্ণয়)

পবম বস্তু হয় ভেই কোথা তাব স্থিতি। কোথা হইতে আসিবা কবে শতদল পদ্মে স্থিতি। শতদল পদ্মে দেখে সেই বেহাব কবে। বেহাব সাঙ্গ হৈলে পুস্তু সেই স্থানে চলে ॥ একা অক্ষয় বিজ বয়েস নিতী কৈসব। নাইকা হইতে স্থিতি ॥ নাএকেব সঙ্গ হইলে প্রেমবস জন্মিলে। তাহাতে পবম বস্তু উৎপত্তি। তাব এক বিন্দু নিকসিলে কামভুবে। কামেব দেস হয় কে। চেতন চিন্তিত অঙ্গিকৃত ॥ নিতাই চৈতন্য অবৈতে তিন দেসে তিন স্থিতি। মুখে চেতন চৈতন্য বন্ধে চিন্তিত নিত্যানন্দ ॥



অদিকৃত মৈত্রেয়্যে ॥ তিন ঘেসে তি নরতি । কামের হিতি নওকে ।  
 তাহাকে সর্জী বলি ॥ প্রেমের হিতি চন্দ্রমণ্ডলে ॥ তাহাকে মহাপর্জী বলি ।  
 সত্য জিব আত্মা ॥ মহাবাস্তা পরমবাস্তা । জিব আত্মা নারায়ণ ॥ পরম  
 আত্মা ব্রহ্মনন্দন ॥ ( আশ্বনিরুপণ )

It would be hardly necessary to pass in review or cite passages from other Sahajiyā works like *Trigunātīkā* <sup>1</sup> *Brajapatala Kārikā* <sup>2</sup> *Kṛiyāmañjarī* <sup>3</sup> *Characteristics of the style of these writings.* *latvanirūpaṇa* <sup>4</sup> *Jighāsāpatrī*, <sup>5</sup> all of which belong to the same age of prose-writing and exhibit similar characteristics nor is much advance noticeable in Rādhāballabh Dās's *Sahaja-tatva*, or *Rasabhakti-chandrikā* (also called *Āśrayanirūpaṇa*) of Chaitanya Dās quoted by Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Buṅga Sāhitya Parichay* <sup>6</sup> It is possible that this may have been the peculiar esoteric sectarian manner of the Sahajiyās but all these writings may also indicate a stage in Bengali prose composition (very unlike that indicated by the *Sāhya Parāṇ* pieces) in which an aphoristic form of theological exposition was widely prevalent, partly due to the exotic influence of Sanscrit Sūtra literature or Sūtra form of writing and partly perhaps an indigenous growth formed upon the manner of exposition followed in native *tolā*. One cannot but be struck by the evenness of method and manner—the sameness of production—of these Sahajiyā works the one work may as well have been written by the author of the other—there being hardly any

<sup>1</sup> *Patricā* 1304, p. 413

*Sāhitya Parichay*, MS. no. 305

<sup>2</sup> *Sāhitya Parichay*, MS. no. 338.

*Sāhitya Parichay*, MS. no. 937

Vol. II, pp. 1655-58 and pp. 1660-61 *Sahaja-tatva* is also noticed in *Patricā*, 1306, pp. 76-77 *Rasabhakti-chandrikā* (also called *Bhāgavānirūpaṇa*) in *Patricā*, 1306, p. 68.

Some improvement, however, in the direction of periodic and sustained prose will be found in some late works belonging probably to the 18th century and certainly not going beyond it. The language here is simple enough in syntax and vocabulary there is no

Other prose writings (18th century)

argumentative or expository purpose in view, no prevalence of stock subject or stock-technicalities. Of these works *Brṇḍāvana-līlā* is really a remarkable composition from our point of view. It describes with all the enthusiasm of the faithful devotee the sacred groves and temples of Brṇḍāvan. We begin with the general topography of the holy place <sup>1</sup>

শ্রীশ্রীগুণালিলা কিকিত লিখতে । আরো শ্রীশ্রীবৃন্দাবন তাঁহার মধ্যে  
 শ্রীশ্রীসোবিন্দজীর মন্দির তাহার উত্তরে শ্রীশ্রীসোপিনাথজীর মন্দির তাহার  
 পশ্চিমে কিছু ছয় ছয় মদন মোহনজীর মন্দির  
 Specimens  
 শ্রীশ্রীগুণাবনের পশ্চিম দিগে কালিদহ সপ্তকেলি  
 কদম্ব তাহার উত্তরে কালিদহর উত্তর কিনারে পূর্বাঘাট তাহার উত্তরে  
 দুর্গলঘাট তাহার পূর্বে বিয়লনির তাহার পূর্বে চিরঘাট বিনাশ চ ঘেন ঘাট  
 কেহ ২ সোবিন্দঘাট কেহন তাহার পূর্বে কেশীঘাট তাহার পূর্বে  
 বংশীবট তাহার পূর্বে গুলিনবন তাহার পূর্বে বিয়স্কমগুল তাহার  
 দক্ষিণে কিছু ছয় ছয় অনুনাথীর পশ্চিম দ্বারে ভোজনট্রিলা বেখানে অত্র  
 পত্নিব স্থানে অত্র নাগিরা বাইরাহিলেন তাহার পশ্চিমে দাবানল তাহার  
 পশ্চিমে গুলু কালিদহের দক্ষিণ কিনারা শ্রীশ্রীগুণাবনে শ্রীশ্রীসোবিন্দ  
 সোপিনাথ মদনমোহন মদনগোপাল বকবেহারী অটলবেহারি চিরবেহারি  
 বৎসবেহারি লালবেহারি রাণবেহারি কুঞ্জবেহারি বেহারিজি রাধাব্রজ  
 রাধাদামোদর রাধামাধব রাধাকান্ত রাবাকৃষ্ণ রাধামোহন রাধারমন দুর্গল-  
 কিশোর কিশোরকিশোরি চকরচকোরি ত্রানাতাম তাম্রপ্পর কালিদর্শন  
 লসোদানন্দন কংসনিকন্দন কেশীঘাটন দেবকিনন্দন মুকুন্দনোহর গোবু-  
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The text here follows *Śikhyā Pariṣat* MS. no. 928. MS. is incomplete and undated but it does not seem to be very old and its date is probably latter part of the 18th century. Dinesh Chandra Sen in his *Baṅga Bhāṣā O Śikhyā* (2nd Ed. p. 690) speaks of a MS of this work which is, in his vague language, about 150 years old.

চান্দ দানিবাণ চিকনাঠাকুর মাখনচৌর গোপীজননীর এবং অনেক ২ বিগ্রহ  
 আছেন অগংগী সংগ্রহ কে কবিরাজ প্রতি প্রণামীর বটে বটে সেবা অগংগী  
 আছেন অতিত কেহ চুটকি কবিরাজ কেহ নাটকনি বিবর্ত ঠাকুর বা ঠাকুরেও  
 কেশীবাটে পুদিনবনে বংশাবটে দিবসনিবে চিববাটে ও ভুগাবাটে ওকানি-  
 দহে এবং আব ২ অনেক ২ স্থানে ২ আছেন ক্রিহাবনিগের বিনা প্রাওতানে  
 কোথাও গমনাগমন নাকী জগদীষ নহোংগন বর্ষিয়া দেহ সাদিত্রা  
 আনিত্রা নিকটে বেন তাহা নৈব এএন নহুবা ক্রিহাবনিগের ভিকারবন  
 নাকী ক্রিহাবা অচাচক ভগন আটনর উপবাস হয় বেন। হুনাঙ্গী  
 জল আহাব তথাচ কাণ্ডিব শৌন্দর্য বড়ই শ্রীশ্রীল্যবনেব নশিনে তিন  
 ক্রোষ মথুবা মথুবা উওবে ভুনাঙ্গী পশ্চিমবাবে অক্রাতি কংসেব  
 আদেশে নন্দীপু বইতে কৃষ্ণবলবানকে মথুবা আনিতে হে ঘাটে কৃষ্ণ  
 বলবানকে ডাকায় বথে বাধিয়া অক্রব স্থান কবিরাজিগেন তাহাত অক্রব  
 ঠাকুর জখন স্থান কবেন তখন ডুব দেওনেব কালে কংসেব ভিত্তব রপ্ত  
 কৃষ্ণবলবানকে দেখিলেন বিস্ময় হইয়া মস্তক তুলিয়া ডাকায় দৃষ্ট ব বিদ্যা দেখেন  
 পূর্বনত ডাকায় বথ আবোহনে আছেন পুনঃ পুনঃ কংসেবার দেখিলেন  
 বা বুঝিলেন নিবস্ত হইলেন সে ঘাটেব পশ্চীমে অক্রবঠাকুরেব একখানি  
 গ্রাম আছেন তাহাতে এক সেবা আছেন তাহাব দক্ষিণে মথুবা সহব মধ্যে  
 বিশ্রান্তবাট কৃষ্ণবলবান বথ হইতে নাধিরা সেই ঘাটে বশীয়াছিলেন ভুনাঙ্গী  
 জল পান কবিয়াছিলেন পূর্ল দিগে শূর্য্যবাট সেখানে বান বাজা তপস্জা  
 কবিয়াছিলেন তাহাব পূর্ল ঐববাট সেখানে ঐবঠাকুর পঞ্চবৎসবেব কালে  
 তপস্জা কবিয়াছিলেন আব আব চন্দ্রিব বাট আছেন মথুবা মধ্যখানে  
 সেখানে কেশী বারজীব মন্দিব মথুবা পশ্চীমদিগে কাবাগাব জেখানে  
 বহুদেব দৈবকি নিগুডবন্ধনে ছিলেন সেস্থানে দৈবকিঠাকুরানি প্রসব হইয়া-  
 ছিলেন সে স্থান অগাবধি প্রকট আছেন মথুবা দক্ষিণদিগে কংস বাজাব  
 আবাব এবং দক্ষিণ দিগ পূর্বনশ্চীম পর্য্যন্ত গড আছে অতি উচ্চতব গডেব  
 মধ্যখানে এক নিবঠাকুর আছেন জে সিব কংসবাজা পূজা কবিতেন মথুবা  
 দক্ষিণে অর্ধক্রোষ সান্তাঙ্কুও সেখানে ঠাকুরেবা মধুপান কবিয়াছিলেন  
 তাগবনেব রক্ষক ধেঙ্ক নামে এক অধুর ছিল তাহাকে বধ কবিয়াছেন

সেখানে এখন তালগাছ নাঞী তাহার উত্তরে একক্রোষ কুন্দবন এক  
 কুণ্ড বড় আছে তাহাতে পদ্মাবধি অনেক কুন্দ হই তাহার পশ্চিমে  
 এক ক্রোষ বহুবন তাহার পশ্চীম দক্ষিণ চারি ক্রোষ রাধাকুণ্ড তাহার  
 পূর্বে ত্রানকুণ্ড দুই কুণ্ড একত্রে মিলন কিন্তু মধ্যে ঐহরের নাঞী সকল  
 নাছেন মধ্যে মধ্যে নুরি সকল আছে অনেক গমনাগমন সদা হইতেছেন  
 ত্রানকুণ্ডের উত্তরে গণিতাকুণ্ড তাহা[তে]ও ঐ প্রকার সাকো ও নুরি আছে  
 ত্রানকুণ্ডের দক্ষিণে চানাল বৃক্ষ ইদানে গোবিন্দজীর ঘেরা রাধাকুণ্ডের  
 বসত বড় সহস্র সহস্র অতিত নাছেন রাধাকুণ্ডের দক্ষিণে এক  
 ক্রোষ গোবর্দ্ধন পর্কত নউরাকৃতি উত্তর দক্ষিণা পর্কত রাধাকুণ্ড ত্রানকুণ্ড  
 দুই নেত্র হএন গোবর্দ্ধন পর্কতের উত্তরদিকে পূর্কধারে ক্রকের চরণ চিত্র  
 তাহার দক্ষিণে আর মধ্যখানে মানসী গঙ্গা বিহারিত বড় মধ্যে মধ্যে  
 বাকা বাকা নাছেন মল অতাপি চন্দ্রবত চতুর্দিকে ঐহরের বাম্ভা চারিদিকে  
 বসত এবং অতিতের কুঠরি নানন পহার পশ্চিমদিকে ত্রজের[র] রাজা বদন  
 সিংহ তাহার এক বাটী বড় চিত্র বিচিত্র তাহার উত্তরদিকে সনাওন  
 গোসাঞের ভজন কঠরি এবং চারি নদীরে চারি সিংহ ঠাকুর আছেন  
 চক্রতির্থ বলিপর্কতের উপর নানান বন নানান অতিব বৃক্ষ পত্র পত্রবানী  
 সদা নেশবন এবং পর্কত নেষের ব্যোতি মধ্যখানে পুরি রায়জীর নদীর  
 ত্রানকুণ্ডের দক্ষিণ এককুণ্ডে গোপাল রায়জীর নদীর জিহৌ গোবর্দ্ধন পর্কত  
 ধারন করিয়াছিলেন নানান অতিব বিক্ষ এবং নানান পক্ষ নানান ফলি  
 করিতেছেন ।

It is impossible not to be struck with the realtive ex-  
 cellence of these passages. In the first place we notice,  
 here a really remarkable attempt at  
 Application of prose to new subjects. sustained prose-writing, a great  
 advance in the facility of handling  
 and a positive tendency to vivacity. In the next place,  
 Descriptive prose. the widening and varying of the  
 range and methods of prose by its  
 application to new subjects is a fact of great significance,

and it is this application of prose to pure narration, description, or conveyance of information in a straightforward intelligible way—childish things of prose, no doubt, but its best exercising ground in infancy—that gives it an ease and fluency attained here for the first time in its history. The description, though a little monotonous, are yet not dry but the very pictorial-poetical nature of the subject-matter often enables the writer to strike into something like style in its proper sense. Here is another passage:

তাহাব উত্তবে একপোবা পথচাবন পাহাড়ি পক্ষ্মেত উপবে বৃক্ষচশ্বেব চবণ চিহ্ন বেহু বংসেব এবং উঠেব এবং নহিশেব এবং ছেপিব এবং আব অনেকেব পদচিহ্ন আছেন জে দিবস বেহু লইয়া শেই পক্ষ্মেত গিয়াছিলেন সে দিবস মুবলিব গানে জমুনা উজান বহিবাছিলেন এবং পাসান গলিবাছিলেন সেই দিবস এই সকল পদচিহ্ন হইবাছেন। গয়াতে গোবর্দনে এবং কান্যকবে এবং চবণ পাহাড়িতে এই চাবি স্থানে চিহ্ন এক সমতুল হইতে কিছু তবতন নাঞী চবণ পাহাড়িব উত্তবে দুই ক্রোষ বড বেন শাহি তাহাব উত্তবে ছোট বেস শাহি তাহাতে এক লক্ষ্মীনাথায়নেব এক সেবা আছেন তাহাব পূর্ষ দক্ষিণ মেবগড তাহাব পূর্ষ উজান এবং জমুনা তাহাব দক্ষিণে অক্ষয় বট তাহাব দক্ষিণে তপোবন তাহাব পূর্ষে নন্দবাট জে বাটে নন্দকে বকান হবিয়াছিলেন। অথ ॥ বনুনাঙ্গীব পাব ভদ্রবন সেখানে ঠাকুবেবা ভদ্র কবিবাছিলেন তাহাব দক্ষিণে ভাণ্ডিবন সেখানে ঠাকুবেবা ভাঁটা খেলাইবাছিলেন তাহাব দক্ষিণে ধূর্য্যঘাট তাহাব দক্ষিণে চিববাট জে বাটে গোপিকাদিগেব বস্ত্র হবন কবিয়াছিলেন বস্ত্র কদম্বগাছে বানীয়া বাখিয়াছিলেন সে কদম্বগাছে অতাপি পূর্ষমত আছেন।

পুনশ্চ মথুবায় অনেক মহাজন আছেন আট দস হাজাব গুজবাতি ব্রাহ্মন আছেন সন্ধ্যাকালে বিশ্রান্তবাটে জমুনাঙ্গীব আবতি হয়েন শহশ্র শহশ্র লোক জমা হয়েন দুই প্রহব বাত্রি তক নাম সঙ্কির্ভন হয়েন পুনশ্চ মথুবাব উত্তর তিন ক্রোষ শ্রীবৃন্দাবন গোবিন্দ-জিউব খেবার পূর্ষ বেহুকুপ গোপিনাথজীব ঘেবাব দক্ষিণ পশ্চীম নিধু

বন চতুর্দিকে পাকা আঁচির পূর্ণপশ্চীমা বন পশ্চীমদিকের দরওয়াজা কুন্ডের তিওর আইতে বামদিকে এক অট্টালিকা অতি গোপনীয় স্থান বাগবান্য বন্যের স্থান্য বড়ই নিধুবনের রক্ষক সহস্র সহস্র বানব বানসি সকল আছেন নানান বয়ে বৃক্ষ পত্র পলবাদি অতি কোনল নানান পুষ্প শকল বিকসিত কোকোলাদী নানান পক্ষ নানান মত ধ্বনি করিতেছেন বনের শোভা কে বর্ণন করিবেক শ্রীশ্রীশ্রীশ্রী মনো মহেশ্বর ও মহা-ধনের ও বাজাদিগের বহু কুম্ম আছেন নিধুবনের পশ্চীমে কিছু চয় হয় নিতু নিকুম্ম জে স্থানে ঠাকুরাণ্ডীও সখি সকল লইয়া বেসবিভাব করিওন ঠাকুরাণ্ডীওর পদচিহ্ন আছেন নিত্য পূজা করেন নিতু নিকুম্মের পূর্বে শ্রীশ্রীমদেও মহাপ্রভুর কুম্ম তাহার ইমানে মহাপ্রভুর মন্দির উত্তরে আনলি সাহু এবং বনুনাধীর সোবিন্দধীর ঘেরার পশ্চীমে মহারাজস্থল তাহার মধ্যে কির্তিচক্র প্রায়ের কুম্ম বড় অনেক অতি আছেন তাহার দক্ষিণে বায়ানশা সেটের কুম্ম অতি রম্য স্থান শ্রীশ্রীশ্রীশ্রী মনো উত্তরে এক বাউকোনে বনুনাধী শ্রীশ্রীশ্রীশ্রী মনো জে জেখানে বানর বানসি আছেন সকল রাজারা রোজবন্দি শুক্ষানিগ্রী বন্দান করিয়া দিরাছেন।

There are of course still many drawbacks and disadvantages of vocabulary and syntax we have occasional intrusion of definite and not merely accidental alliteration inherited from the traditions of verse-forms and some of the lines are no doubt capable of exact  
 Characteristics of this prose.      stave-division but one does not really want faultless precocity at the outset and after all is said, it must

be admitted that here there is no longer any falling back upon the tricks of verse and other uncongenial things and that the rhythm attained is not really poetic rhythm but it is something approaching, in however groping fashion, to the creation of definite prose rhythm with its balance of phrase its variation of long and short sentences and its natural adjustment of clauses with due regard to general harmonic effect.

There are specimens of another work, supposed to date from the 18th century, called *Brndābana Parich-  
·amā* of which passages are quoted by Dineschandra

Sen in *Banga Sāhitya Parichaya*  
*Brndābana Parichaya* (vol. II, p 1674) from a MSS dated

B S 1218 This composition, like

the *Brndābana-līlā*, also purports to be a description of the holy place a fact which seems to indicate that works of this nature were more numerous than usually supposed The same characteristic descriptive style is also illustrated here and it is needless to quote here a longer passage than the following

তাহাব অগ্নিকোণে বাসস্থল কিশোবীবট সেই স্থানে শুশুস্থল  
জাবট গ্রামেব পশ্চিম কোকিল-বন কোকিলেব  
Specimens of its prose কুলি হইতেছে শ্রীমতী শুনিয়াছিণেন সেই  
স্থানে এক কুণ্ড তাহাতে কেলিকদম্বেব গাছ বেষ্টিত আছে তাহা  
হইতে দুই কোশ চবণপাহাড়ী তাহাব উপব শ্রীবলবামজীএব চবণ-  
চিহ্ন ১ হাত প্রস্থ অষ্ট অঙ্গুলি শ্রীকৃষ্ণেব চবণ-চিহ্ন তিন পোয়া প্রস্থ  
সাত অঙ্গুলি ঐ পাহাড়েতে গোধনেব পাঁজ আব মোধেব পাঁজ আব  
উটেব পাঁজ সেই পাহাড়েতে দুইভাই মুবলীধনি কবিয়াছিণেন পাহাড়ে  
হাঁটুগাড়া চিহ্ন আছে তাহাব পশ্চিম সাত খব্যা খেলাব চিহ্ন আছে  
তাহাব পশ্চিম চরণগঙ্গা তাহাব দক্ষিণ অর্দ্ধ কোশ বড় বেটনগ্রাম তাহাতে  
সেবা শ্রীমুবলীধব ঠাকুর জীউ।

From the dry pseudo-metaphysical exposition of the *Sahajiyā* works to this 18th century descriptive prose is indeed a long step but this extraordinary development, apparently puzzling, will be intelligible when we take into account the fact that early Bengali poetical literature by this time had attained a very high degree of relative perfection and was by this process preparing the way for the creation of a literary language in general. The resources of the language and its literary



capacities were now brought within easy reach of any prose writer—although such writers were not plentiful—who would have had chosen to utilize them. The wonderfully rapid and accomplished literary development of prose in the 19th century caught up summed and uttered in more perfect form this literary heritage of past ages but even in a period of scanty prose production such as the 18th century in which verse-treatment of every subject was still predominant we cannot mistake the influence of the enormous literary perfection of the language in general on whatever little prose it produced.

It may be necessary in this connexion to indicate the influence of Sanscrit learning on early Bengali prose-writing. It is pretty certain that the specimens of such prose as we possess whether of the metaphysical or the descriptive sort represent periods when Sanscrit culture of some kind was already open to and in some degree had been enjoyed by the writers. Not only occasional Sanscrit forms and technicalities are perceived and some Sanscrit works on Law and Logic were directly translated but the general tendency in spite of occasional easy note of works like *Bṛhadāraṇya-kāṇḍa* was towards sanscritised if not ornate diction although no effective Sanscrit influence with its predilection for long-drawn-out compound words complex sentence-framing, and other things, may be definitely traced anywhere. This prose manner, however, cannot be called sanscritic in the sense in which it is used to designate the pedantic affectation of some of the Fort William College pundits or the Sanscrit College style of the fifties and it is remarkable that with hardly any model before

them, these writers never chose to imitate the later sesquipedalian Sanscrit prose style of *Kādambarī* or *Harśacharita*. Much has been written, however, on the Sanscrit influence which is supposed to have come through the *Kathakas* or professional story-tellers, whose manner and method of exposition is said to have considerably moulded the narrative or descriptive literature of the type in question but it must be admitted that though sometimes their "set passages" evince a highly artistic or poetic style, their bombastically ornate diction and artificial arrangement, their predilection for Sanscritic forms and long-balanced sentences, their highly cadenced rhetorical eloquence label their prose-passages at once as essentially one of the ornate kind showing little colour of resemblance to the type of prose we are discussing.

In the absence of any material to go upon, it is impossible to indicate how far the experiment in descriptive prose of the literary kind, such as we find in the *Brāhman-līlā* or *Brāhman-parikramā*, was followed upon in any other prose-writing of the period but the existence and popularity of such contemporary descriptive poems as *Kāśī-parikramā* of Jājanarāyan would seem to indicate,

Miscellaneous prose  
writings

in spite of occasional and timid trespass, the still exclusive monopoly of verse in the domain of such literature.

The excursion of prose, however, beyond the narrow limits of metaphysical matter was an attempt the lesson of which was perhaps not wholly lost. From the few prose pieces of that century which have come down to us, we find application of prose in treatises on law, logic, and medicine, subjects hitherto attempted, as all subjects were, in verse. Although only a few such works have yet been discovered, it is quite

plausible that such attempts were not sporadic or isolated but were more numerous and abun-

Not sporadic or isolated attempts. berate than the scanty remains would justify us to infer. One limitation

still remains namely, that of translation (for most of these works are translations or adaptations from Sanskrit originals) but translation in the school time of Bengali prose is not a drawback or disadvantage but a distinct means of attaining diversity, adequacy and accomplishment. Here is a very simple passage from a manuscript

(about 200 years old) on medicine  
A treatise on Medicine called *Kabirajī Pāṭhā* (*Kabirajī Pāṭhā*) which gives a recipe for dyspepsia.

বাই মথনের প্রতিকার। তপসি কর। তপসি করিয়া মনেতে  
সিদ্ধ করিব। তবে হৃদে সিদ্ধাইব। তপ করিয়া শুদ্ধ করিব। তবে একাল  
তোলাইব। বজ্র ত্রিকটু শুদ্ধকক (১) দ্বৈতধু তেজপত্র এলাইচ নামে  
৪৪ তালিপত্র ৪৩০খন পদ্মকটি দেবদারু কালজিরা মহুরী লবঙ্গ।  
তুষ্টিবত্ত। তুষ্টি ৪ তোলা নবাত ১৬ সের হুদ্দ ১২৬। তুষ্টি চূর্ণ করিব।  
এ তিনশাব আতিব। তবে বকাল দিব। বজ্র ত্রিকটু শুদ্ধকক বংশ  
লোচন শুদ্ধক এলাইচ তেজপত্র কালজিরা ঐতিহ্যী মরীচ নামে৪৪ এলাইচ  
এতি ২ তোলা এ সব চূর্ণ করিয়া হুদ্দে সিদ্ধাইব। তবে সিদ্ধ হইলে মউ  
দিব। তবে সিদ্ধ হয়। ইহার শূল ঘুচে। আখল পীতি ঘুচে। বৃক  
বেধা ঘুচে। আখল হইতে বে ২ বলবান হয় ডাঙ্গা ঘুচে। ইহার নাম  
তুষ্টিবত্ত।

The following passage is from a work on the "Philosophy of Grammar" called *Bhāṣā parichekṣedā* (ভাষা পরিক্ষেদ) (MS dated BS 1181) apparently a translation of the Sanskrit original of the same name. The beginning runs thus

The text given here a little modernised perhaps in spelling follows the quotation in *B P Patrikā*, 1903, no. 1 p. 51

গোতম মুনির শিষ্য সকলে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন, আমাবদিগের মুক্তি কি প্রকারে হয় তাহা কৃপা করিয়া বল। তাহাতে গোতম উত্তর করিলেন তাবৎ পদার্থ জানিলেই মুক্তি হয়। তাহাতে শিষ্যারা নরকে জিজ্ঞাসা করিলেন পদার্থ কত। তাহাতে গোতম বহিঃস্থছেন। পদার্থ সপ্ত প্রকার। দ্রব্য ওণ কন্ম সামান্য বিশেষ সমবায় অভাব। তাহাব মৰ্যে দ্রব্য নয় প্রকার।

Again

নীমাংসা মতে কর্তৃশ্লোক শব্দ নিচে স্তোত্রিক শব্দ উক্ত বর্ণিত শব্দকে দ্বৈধব কহেন নীমাংসকেবা পবনাত্মা মনেন না। অতঃপব দাম্ভব পবিত্র্য কহিতেছি। ব্যাপাবদং বাবণেব নাম কবণ। বাবণ ভুক্ত হইয়া কার্যজনক যে হয় তাহাব নাম ব্যাপাব। অন্তনিতিব অপব কাবণ পশুতা আছে। ইহাতে প্রাচীন পণ্ডিতেরা বহেন পৰ্বতে বহি নন্দেহেব নাম পশুতা। এ কথা ভানো নহে কাবণ যে হয় সে অবশ্য কার্যেব অব্যবহিত পূৰ্ব্ব ক্ষণেতে থাকে। প্রথম ক্ষণে সাব্য সংশয় পবে ব্যাপ্তিব স্মৃতি পবে পবামর্শ। তবে পবামর্শ কালে সংশয় নষ্ট হইলে অন্তনিতিব পূৰ্ব্বক্ষণ পবামর্শ ক্ষণ হয় সে ক্ষণে সংশয় থাকিল না। জ্ঞান ইচ্ছা বেদনত স্মৃতঃস্থ। ইহাবা দ্বিধা স্বায়ী পদার্থ ত্রিধা নষ্ট হয় জানিবে।<sup>1</sup>

From a work on law and ritual called *Byabasthū-tatva* <sup>2</sup>

অথ অপালন নিমিত্তক গোবধ প্রারম্ভিত ব্যবস্থা। সৰ্ব্বথা প্রকারে প্রতিপালন না কবে ইহাতে শীত অনিল উদ্বন্ধন শূন্যগাব জননধ্য অগ্নিদাহ পতন গৰ্ভে ব্যাঘ্র ইত্যাদি নিমিত্তক যদি গোবধ হয় তবে অর্ধ

<sup>1</sup> This passage is taken from a notice of the manuscript in question in *S P Patrikā*, 1304, p. 325 the text is obviously punctuated and modernised in spelling. More specimens of this prose would have been welcome, but unfortunately only these two passages are given. I have not been able to get access to the manuscript itself.

<sup>2</sup> This curious manuscript is noticed in *S P Patrikā*, 1308, p. 43 from which the above quotation is taken. It is written in Sanscrit but part of it is in Bengali prose. The date of the manuscript is 1235 B S.

গোচর পায়ে দিয়া গোসহিত অত্যন্ত বাতাব্যঙ্গপ ইতিকর্তব্যতা করিয়া  
 প্রজ্ঞাপত্যও প্রারম্ভিত হয়। যদি ইতিকর্তব্যতা না কোরিণ্ডে পারে তবে  
 ইতিকর্তব্যতার অধিক এক প্রজ্ঞাপত্য হয়। অতএব প্রজ্ঞাপত্য হই  
 প্রারম্ভিত হয়। তদ অধিকল বট কার্যপন বরাটিকা দিবেক। ইহাতে  
 এক সানাত্ত গোদক্ষিণা হয় তদধিকল বৃষন্য পক্ষ কার্য। সানাত্ত  
 সোন্য এক কার্যপন এবং বট কার্যপন বরাটিকা দক্ষিণা হয়। ইহাতে  
 বিশেষ বচনপ্রাপ্ত শূদ্রের প্রজ্ঞাপত্য হই প্রারম্ভিত হয়।

The stiffness of the subject and style of the original is no doubt, partially responsible for the want of ease or fluency in the translation but the very fact that the translator had to keep himself close to his original gave him a more correct syntax and a precision and condensation of language, eminently suited for such exposition but differing greatly from the sententious manner of the previous age.

Even the theological literature assumed a more orderly style. This will be illustrated from the following short passage from *Gāṇādi Sūdhana* quoted in *Baṅga Sūktiya Parichaya* <sup>1</sup>

পরে অজানী নিত্য মনে হৈয়া সেই সাধুকে শ্রীকৃষ্ণ জ্ঞান করিয়া জিজ্ঞাসা  
 করেন অনাকৈ কৃপা করিয়া অজ্ঞান জন্মাইয়া পরে নিত্য শ্রীনবদীপের  
 শ্রীকৃষ্ণ ১০৩৩কে পৃথক দেখাইয়া নিত্য শ্রীমদা  
 বনের পরমেশ্বর শ্রীকৃষ্ণদিকে দেখাইয়া কৃতার্থ  
 করিলেন। পরে সেই সাধু কৃপা করিয়া সেই  
 অজ্ঞান জনকে ১০৩৩ করিয়া তাহার পরীক্ষের মধ্যে জীবাত্মকে  
 অত্যন্ত দেখাইয়া পরে তাহার বান কর্ণেও শ্রী ১০৩৩ বস করিয়া পরে

A passage from  
*Gāṇādi Sūdhana*.

Vol II pp. 1630-37 This MS dated 1158 B S is also noticed in *S. P. Patrika*, 1304, p. 341 where it is called *Sūdhana Katha*. The text as given in those places is obviously punctuated and corrected in spite of

সেই চৈতন্য মন্ত্রের অর্থ জানাইয়া পবে সেই জীব দ্বাবাএ দশ ইন্দ্ৰিয়াদিগুণ  
 নিত্য শবীর দেখাইয়া পবে সাবক অভিমাণে শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদিব রূপ আবোপ  
 চিণ্ডাতে দেখাইয়া পবে সিদ্ধি অভিমান শ্রীকৃষ্ণাদিব মুক্তি পৃথক দেখাইয়া  
 প্রেমলক্ষণাব সমাধি ভক্তিও সংস্থাপন কবিলেন। পবে সেই অজ্ঞানী জন  
 এইপ্রকার সেই গুণ হইতে আপনাব আত্মাকে পৃথক দেখিয়া পবে নিত্য  
 শ্রীনবদ্বীপেব শ্রীকৃষ্ণচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুকে পৃথক দেখিয়া পবে সাবক দেখিয়া  
 অভিমাণে শ্রীবাধারূপাদি পৃথক প্রেমলক্ষণা বনময়ী ভক্তি কবিয়া নিত্য  
 বসে বিবাজ কবিলে পুনর্বার সেই গুণস্থানে. কহেন আপনে আনাব  
 জ্ঞানদাতা শ্রীগুণ আপনি আনাব জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়াছেন কি না তাহা  
 বুঝিবাব কাবণ আনাকে জিজ্ঞাসা কবিয়াছেন তাহাতে আপনি  
 আমাকে যে প্রকার জ্ঞান জন্মাইয়াছেন তাহাতে আমি যে প্রকার  
 বুঝিয়াছি তেমত কহিলাম। পবে সেই জ্ঞানদাতা শ্রীগুণ শিষ্যকে  
 আলিঙ্গন কবিয়া আশীর্বাদ কহিলেন তুনার গুজ্ঞানআদি জন্মিয়াছে তুমি  
 শ্রীমদ্ভাবনে প্রেমলক্ষণা বনময়ী ভক্তিতে বিবাজ কব ॥ ইতি ॥

All this is indeed a great advance towards periodic or  
 balanced prose The syntax is not irregular the verb  
 is not dropped or shifted at will the clauses are not  
 clumsily thrown together or inverted  
 Advance towards maturity not decline with complete disregard of general  
 harmony in short, the whole trend  
 is a movement towards maturity and not decline, and, if it  
 is not too sweeping to generalise, towards modernity itself

It would not be strictly proper to take into account, as  
 specimens of literary style, the prose of a few deeds and  
 documents which have come down from the 17th and 18th  
 centuries but this "documentary" prose though seldom  
 rising into art, indicate, that by  
 Prose of deeds and documents what they illustrate application of prose to an infinite  
 variety of subjects, the right direc-  
 tion was being taken towards systematic prose-writing,

towards the creation of a prose-of-all work. In those days of Persian ascendancy the application of Bengali to these documents is a fact significant in itself and these specimens show vernacular letter writing, one of the most powerful instruments in the formation of a General prose style, in full operation. Before the Third Literary Conference in North Bengal (1316 B S) the President in his address quoted specimens of two Bengali letters written by Assamese

Specimens of two  
old letters      Kings one of which dates back to 1477 and the other to 1553 Śaka.

We quote here the first named letter dated 1477, written by Rājā Naranārāyan to the Ahom King Chukamfā Svargadeva.

যতি সকল সিংহবস্তি কর্ণাঙ্গানন্দীৰণপ্রচলিতহিমকরহাৰহানকণ  
কৈলাসপাণ্ডৱপাৰাশিবিবাসিতজিপিষ্টপত্ৰিদশতৰসিদ্ধিনিম্নলপবিজকলে-  
বরদীৰপদীৰ বৈধৰ্ম্যাদাপাৰাবাৰ সকলদিক্কাৰিনীগীৰমানসুদনত্ৰান  
শ্ৰীশ্ৰী বৰ্ণনাৰায়ণ মহাৰাজ প্রচণ্ডপ্রতাপেশ্ব।

লেখনং কাৰ্য্যক। এৰা আনৰ কুশল। তোমাৰ কুশল নিৰন্তরে  
বাছা কৰি। অখন তোমাৰ আনৰ সন্তোষসম্পাদক পত্ৰাপত্ৰি গওঁৱাত  
হৈলে উত্তৰাংকুণ শ্ৰীতিব বীৰ অচুৰিত হৈতে য়হে। তোমাৰ আনৰ  
কৰ্ত্তব্যে সে বৰ্হতাক পাই পুশ্চিত কৰিত হৈবেক। আনৰা সেই উজোগত  
আছি। তোমারো এগোট কৰ্ত্তব্য উচিত হয়। না কৰ তাক আপনে  
জান। অধিক কি লেখিব। সত্যানন্দ কৰ্ম্মী ৰামেশ্বৰ শৰ্ম্মা কালকৈতু  
ও ধুনা সদায় উত্তৰ চাউনিয়া শ্ৰামৰাই ইমৰাক পাঠাইতেছি তামৰাৰ  
মুখে সকল সমাচাৰ বুঝিয়া চিত্তাপ বিদায় দিবা।

Reports of the Conference (*Uttara Banga Sāhitya Sammilana Tristya Adhibesana Kāryabharanī*), pp. 36-37. These were first published in *Asambant* June 37 1901 and August 1 1901. The first of these letters has been (without any indication of its source) reprinted in *Banga Sāhitya Parichaya* vol. II, p. 1072.

Here is an extract from the second letter dated 1553 Śaka written by the Assamese King to Mohammedan Faujdār Nawāb Aleyā Khān of Gauhātī

স্বস্তি বিবিধ গুণগাভীৰ্য্যপৰমোদাব শ্ৰীযুক্ত নবাব আলোমাব খাঁ  
সদাশয়েষু।

মনেহ লিখনং কাৰ্য্যঞ্চ। আগং এথা কুশল। তোমাৰ কুশল মতে  
চাহি। পৱন সমাচাৰপত্ৰ এহি। এখন তোমাৰ উৰিল পএনহ আনিয়া  
আমাৰ স্থান পহুঁছিল। আমিও প্ৰীতিপ্ৰণয়পূৰ্বক জ্ঞাত হইলান। আব  
তুমি যে লিখিয়াছ তোমাৰ উওম পত্ৰ আসিতে আমাৰ কিঞ্চিং মনপিতা  
না য়হে এয়ে তোমাৰ ভালাই দৌলত। গতএব আমিও পবন আল্লাদকপে  
জানিতে আছো তোমাৰ আমাৰ অদ্ব্যভাব প্ৰীতি ঘটিলে মনমাকিক নপ্তোব  
কি কাৰণ না হইবেক। আব তোমাৰ আমাৰ অত্যন্তকপে আনন্দযুক্ত  
হইলে উভয় পক্ষ লোকেব নাবিদেশকপ অবিধুতা অন্তশেত বিসক না  
বহিবেক। এ কাৰণ তুমি লেখিবাক পোবা।

Extract from Nanda  
kumār's letter to his son Gurudās published in the  
Gurudās  
From the letter of Nandakumār to  
his son Gurudās published in the  
*Sāhitya Parīsat Patricā* (B S 1310,  
pp 62-65)<sup>1</sup>

তোমাৰ মঙ্গল সৰ্বদা বাসনা কবনক অএ কুশল পবন্তঃ ২৫ তাৰিখেব  
পত্ৰ ২৭ বোজ বাএ পাইয়া সমাচাৰ জানিলাম শ্ৰীযুত ফেতবত আলিখা  
এৱ এখানে আইশনেব সখাদ জে লিখিযাছিলে এতক্ষণতক পঁহুচেন নাই  
পঁহুচিলেই জানা জাইবেক শ্ৰীযুত বায় জগৎচন্দ্ৰ বিষ বোজেব পৱ বাটি  
হইতে আসিযাছেন যেমত ২ কুচেষ্ঠী পাইতেছেন তাহা জানাই গেল  
তিনি যথা ২ জাউন ফলত কাৰ্য্যেব দ্বাৰাতেই বুঝিবেন পষ্ট হইয়া আপনাবি  
মন্দ কবিতোছেন সে সকল লোকেও অবস্থা বুঝিবেক তুমি শ্ৰীযুত মন্ত্ৰ

<sup>1</sup> For the history and text of these documents, see *S P, Patricā*, 1306, pp 297-301 and *ibid*, 1308. The text, however, is taken from a very modern copy of the original. They are reprinted in *Banga Sāhitya Parichaya*, vol II, pp 1638-43.



নেদলটন সাহেবের নিকট আশ্রয় করিবে একঘণ্টা তাঁহাকে লিখিলাম  
 নিম্ন নিম্নাঙ্গ সকল কহিবে ও শুনিবে তখন মেরুপ কথোপকথন হয়  
 তাহার মত করিবে তিহ চিত্তে জানেন যে আমার কথাএমেই ইনি  
 কার্য করিতেছেন সুন্দররূপ তাহার সহিত মিলিবে কোনও বিশেষ  
 উদ্দেশ্য নহিবে।

This is not absolutely despicable writing, even though  
 in the last extract there is an in-  
 A passage from old document evitable tincture of Persian due  
 partly perhaps to the fact that it  
 was addressed to a Mohammedan Nawāb. The same  
 tendency is illustrated by the documents dated B S 1125  
 and 1137, relating to the Baiyānab triumph of Rādhā  
 Mohan Das Jhākūr<sup>1</sup> which were published and edited  
 by R. Friedl in the *Patrika* from which it is needless  
 to quote more than the following short illustrative  
 extract. It speaks of the পরকীর doctrine :

পরে আমার কহিলাম মোড়মেদে শ্রীশ্রী অকুর শাদাধিত হান  
 সেখানে শ্রীশ্রী তাগবত শাস্ত্রী আছেন এবং সভাপদ হান আছেন  
 তাহার নবোপাধ্যায় বিচার হইবেক গোড়ে পরকীর ধর্মের অবিকারী  
 তাহার বকীর ধর্ম লবে কেন এখানে যেমত সভাপদ হইল মোড়মেদে  
 অনেক সভাপদ আছে বিচার করিবেক অতএব এখানকার সভাপদ এক  
 পতিত ও এক নবোপদায় যার তবে বিচার কবিয়া বকীর ধর্ম সংস্থাপন  
 করিয়া আইসে তাহাতে সর্বগমত মতে শ্রীযুত বহাওয়াল সভাপদ শ্রীযুত

Some letters of Vāndakumār dated 1756 are published by Beveridge in the *Natal Magazine* (September 1873). The letter of which quotation is given is dated 1772.

In this connection it is necessary to mention the documents relating to the affairs of Lālā Udayanārīyaq Rāj published in the *Patrika*, 1308 pp. 243-54. In spite of a slight admixture of Persian here we have good specimens of descriptive prose. The passages, however are too lengthy for full quotation here.

কৃষ্ণদেব ভট্টাচার্য্য জিঁহো স্বকীয় পবকীয় বিভিন্ন কবিলেন তিহা দ্বিধিজয় মহাবাজাব সভা হইতে তাহাকে আনিয়া এবং এক মনস্বোধদাব সহিত প্রয়াগ ও কাশী হইয়া আইলান তাবাও স্বকীয়ান দণ্ডখত কবিয়া দিলেন পবে গোড়দেশে আসিয়া গোস্বামীগণ ও মহান্তসন্তান মহান্তশাখাগণ যে যে স্থানে আছেন সর্বত্র অনেক বিচাব হইল সকলে বিচাবে দ্বিধিজয়ী স্থানে অজয়পত্র দিলেন পবে শ্রীপাটখণ্ডে আইলান তাহাদের সহিত অনেক কথোপকথন হইল তাহাবা কহিলেন আমবা শ্রীশ্রী মহাপ্রভু মতাবলম্বী তাহাব মতাবিকারী শ্রীশ্রী ছয় গোস্বামী তাহাবা যে মত অবলম্ব গ্রহণ কবিয়াছেন সেই মত আমবা যাচন কবি সেই সব মতেব সাব গোস্বামীবা বেদ-প্রাণিত এবং ওন্-প্রাণিত এবং বস-প্রাণিত যে সকল ভাগবত শাস্ত্র কবিয়াছেন তাহা ব্যতিবেক কবিয়া আমবা স্বকীয়ায় কিমত দস্তখত কবিব অতএব শ্রীযুত গোস্বামীব গাদিব গ্রহণায়ে অধিকারী শ্রীশ্রী চিনিবাস আচার্য্য ঠাকুর তাহাব নগুন সকল আছেন তাহাদের স্থানে আগে দণ্ডখত কবাহ তবে আমবাহ দণ্ডখত কবিয়া দিব এ কথায আমবা শ্রীপাট যজ্ঞগ্রাম বাইয়া দখল কবিতো কহিলেন আমবা স্বকীয়াব দণ্ডখত বিনা বিচাবে পাবিব না আমবা শ্রীচৈতন্য মহাপ্রভুব মতাবলম্বী অতএব বিচাবে যে ধর্ম্ম স্থায়ী হয় তাহাই নইবে এই মত কবাব হইল বিচাব মানিলাম তাহাতে পাতসাই শুভা শ্রীযুত নবাব জাফর খাঁ সাহেব নিকট দবখাস্ত হইল তিহো কহিলেন ধর্ম্মাধর্ম্ম বিনা ভজবিজ হয় না অতএব বিচাব কবুল কবিলেন সেই মত সভাসদ হইল।

These 17th and 18th century documents and other prose pieces show that even in the hands or mouths of people, who cannot be strictly called literary, the vernacular in that stage of prose-writing had quite got out of mere rusticity or childish babblement. The stage of apprenticeship was indeed not over but it is good straight-forward Bengali attaining sufficient

Summary of the achievements of old Bengali prose

rhythmical and verbal dignity and showing the way to better things if it had suited the writers to write more originally in prose. Treatises on law, medicine and similar documents or esoteric theological writing can seldom in the very nature of the case lay claim to literary competence or to the motive power of style, but the description of *Bṛndāvan* and such other things gives better opportunities and rude though the resources of form and model were yet such as they were they were used with sufficient skill. This though qualified is high praise indeed. Full and mature prose style is yet to come, indeed style in the strict and rare sense had scarcely been attained or consciously attempted. The necessary stock of material was yet to be accumulated, the necessary plant and method of working to be slowly and painfully elaborated. There was still clumsiness and uncouth handling inseparable from earliness and immaturity. These *Sahajiyā* and other works again written as they were for an exclusive and esoteric sect and in a difficult language were not very widely known or easily accessible to all. In fact their general influence was not much and this may be one reason why their very laudable attempt at vernacular prose-writing was not so widely taken up or readily emulated as it should have been. But the return to vernacular writing from Sanskrit or Persian, the general change of ground from verse to prose, the widening of subjects and methods, the practising of a perfectly homely and vernacular style free from obscurity or ornate Sanskrit constructions, and lastly the example

Its formal importance and general movement towards the evolution of an indigenous prose style

of easy plain business-like narration not altogether devoid of character all this meant a very great deal. The result achieved may not have been

literature in the proper sense but the small amount of

positive achievement should not blind us to its immense formal importance or to the fact that all this indicated a movement towards better and better prose-writing and the gradual evolution of an indigenous prose style. But in the years which followed, during days of political and social instability and general decay of culture consequent upon revolutionary changes of government, the development of Bengali prose met with a great check, and it was not until nearly a century had elapsed, with the establishment of peace and prosperity, business and leisure, congenial to its cultivation, that we have again the serene exercise of elaborate prose. But for this arrested development and its rebirth under entirely different conditions, Bengal prose would have developed along the lines indicated, entirely self-made and home-grown<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Since writing the above essay on Old Bengali Prose I have seen the text of *Golak Samhitā* of Brindāban Dīś published in the *Patricā* 1309, pp 55-59. It purports to be a brief treatise on cosmology. The MS is undated but it has been supposed to be not older than the latter part of the 18th century. The beginning is in prose while the latter part is in verse. Here is an illustrative extract.

সর্লদৌ মহাশূন্য । তহুপরি অরকাব । ওহুপরি বৃত্তকার । তহুপরি শ্রিয় পবন ।  
 ওহুপরি কুর্শ্ববাজ । ওহুপরি ঐবাবত । অন্য উব মহস্র ফণা । আন মহাফণা , তাব পান্ন  
 . সপ্ত পাতাল । কি কৌ । এতল ১ বিতল ২ স্ততল ৩ এনাতল ৪ বনাতল ৫ মহাতল ৬  
 পাতাল ৭ এই সপ্তপাতাল । তহুপরি পৃথিবী । পৃথিবী বেষ্টিত সপ্ত সাগর । কি কৌ ।  
 লবণ ১ হৈম্ব ২ সুরা ৩ সর্পিং ৪ দধি ৫ দুগ্ধ ৬ জলাতকা ৭ । সপ্তদ্বিপ বেষ্টিত সপ্ত  
 সাগর । সপ্ত দ্বিপেব নান কি । অশ্বদ্বিপঃ পক্ষদীপ কুমদ্বিপ বাকদ্বিপ মাকদ্বিপ  
 পুষ্করদ্বিপ অনন্তদ্বিপ ৭ ,

## APPENDIX II

[ Page 109 footnote ]

### THE BENGALI BIBLE

With respect to the name given to the Serampore Bible we have the following entry in Fountain Diary on the 1th January 1798 (quoted in *Contributions towards a History of Biblical Translations in India* Calcutta 1851) — ' This morning the Pandit attended upon us. It was observed that the word *Musjilakhya* would not properly denominate the whole Bible as it only signified good news a term more applicable to the Gospel. It was then proposed to call the Bible *Dharma Shastri* but the Pandit said *Shastri* only meant that writing which contained command or orders. We must therefore call it *Dharma pustika*, or the Holy Book.' On the 18th March 1800<sup>1</sup> the first sheet of Matthew was printed. On the 7th February 1801 the first edition of the Bengali New Testament was published. It consisted of 2 000 copies the expense was £62. In 1800, the translation of the Old Testament was finished. The books of the Old Testament as printed by the Serampore Press (1801-09) are in 4 volumes, viz (1) Pentateuch 1801 (2) Joshua Esther 1802 (3) Job-Song of Solomon 1804 (4) Isaiah Malachi, 1805. According to the Serampore *Memoirs* however the dates of publication are (1) 1801 (2) 1802, (3) 1803 (4) 1807. The *Memoirs* however are not always reliable in this respect. The Psalter appears to have been issued separately in 1803.

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The date is incorrectly given as 1803 by Dinesh Ch. Sen (*Hist. of Beng Lang and Lit* 1911 p. 802). See Tenth Memoir Appendix.

In 1803, the second edition of the Bengali New Testament was commenced and in 1806, it was ready, 1500 copies. The proof-sheets were examined by every one of the missionaries, and, in addition to this, Carey and Marshman went through it, verse by verse, one reading the Greek, the other the Bengali text. In 1809, the Old Testament was published and in the same year, the whole Bible appeared in five large volumes. It was the work of Carey's own hand (manuscripts may be seen still in the possession of the Serampore Baptist Missionaries), for, Ward, writing some years subsequently, mentions that Carey "wrote with his own pen the whole of the five volumes." In 1809, a third edition of the New Testament went to the Press, consisting of 100 copies and came out in 1811. It was a folio edition. The fourth edition of the New Testament was commenced in 1813 and published in 1817 (5,000 copies) [the date is wrongly given as 1816 in the tenth *Memoir*], the sixth edition of the New Testament and third edition of the Old in 1820, 8th edition of the whole Bible in 1832. The text of this revised edition in double columns is divided into two parts.

1. Genesis Esther, p. 204. 2. Job Malachi and the New Testament pp. 623. The New Testament has a separate title-page, with date 1832 in Bengali, and 1833 in English figures. Other important subsequent translations of the Bible are

(1) The Old Testament translated from the original Hebrew by Dr. W. Yates and the Calcutta Baptist Missionaries with native assistants, pp. 813, Calcutta 1844. The New Testament translated by Dr. Yates, Calcutta 1833, and also an edition printed for the British and Foreign Bible Society in 2 vols. in Roman character, London, 1839. The whole Bible translated out of the original tongues by W. Yates and other Calcutta Baptist

Missionaries with native assistants, pp 1144, Calcutta 1845

(2) The above revised by J Wenger pp 1139 Calcutta, 1861 A reprint in smaller size appeared in 1867, edited with slight alterations by C B Lewis

(3) The Holy Bible in Bengali with references translated by the Baptist Missionaries with Bengali assistants Revised edition by G H Rouse pp. 815 257 Calcutta 1897

(4) The New Testament translated by J P Ellerton pp 993 Calcutta 1819

The different books of the Bible published separately are not mentioned here the earliest being Matthew (1800) to which were annexed some of the most remarkable prophecies in the Old Testament respecting Christ ' The next in chronological order of publication was Pentateuch (1801)

## APPENDIX III

(Page 187 footnote)

SHOST<sub>i</sub> HO KOT<sub>i</sub> HA K<sub>i</sub> HENKSH<sub>i</sub> YALEE AR DANĀKAKER

Ek K<sub>i</sub> henksh<sub>i</sub> yalee dek<sub>i</sub> hilek ek danĀkak b<sub>i</sub> halo ek tookia poneerei apan mook<sub>i</sub> he lo<sub>i</sub> 1 ya ek gach<sub>i</sub> her daler oopoi bosh<sub>i</sub> ya 1oh<sub>i</sub> yach<sub>i</sub> he, tutk<sub>i</sub> hyonat k<sub>i</sub> henksh<sub>i</sub> yalee bibechna konite lagilo je emon shoo shwadoo grash kemon kor<sub>i</sub> ya hat konite paibo Kohilek, he pi<sub>i</sub> ye kak aji shokale tomake dek<sub>i</sub> h<sub>i</sub> ya am<sub>i</sub> boio shontooshto ho<sub>i</sub> iya-ch<sub>i</sub> h<sub>i</sub>, tomar shoondui moniti a<sub>i</sub> oojjol palok amai chok<sub>i</sub> yei jyoti, jodi nomita kiome toomi onoogroho kor<sub>i</sub> ya amake ektee gan shoona<sub>i</sub> ite, tobe nishshondeho janitam je toma<sub>i</sub> shwoi tomar a<sub>i</sub> a<sub>i</sub> goonei shoman bote Anondonmotto kak e<sub>i</sub> 1 onoonoyo kot<sub>i</sub> hate b<sub>i</sub> hool<sub>i</sub> ya tahake apan shoorei poripatee dek<sub>i</sub> ha<sub>i</sub> ibai jonye mook<sub>i</sub> h<sub>i</sub> k<sub>i</sub> hoolilek tok<sub>i</sub> hon poneei neeche por<sub>i</sub> lo, taha tok<sub>i</sub> honi k<sub>i</sub> henksh<sub>i</sub> yalee oot<sub>i</sub> ha<sub>i</sub> 1 ya lo<sub>i</sub> 1 ya jo<sub>i</sub> yo jookta prosht<sub>i</sub> han konilek, a<sub>i</sub> danĀkakke obshoro kiome apon mitt<sub>i</sub> hya goimai k<sub>i</sub> hed konite iak<sub>i</sub> h<sub>i</sub> ya gelo

Ihai p<sub>i</sub> hol e<sub>i</sub> 1, jek hane alopit ko<sub>i</sub> t<sub>i</sub> ha probesh koie shek<sub>i</sub> hane gnyan gochai lop pa<sub>i</sub> e

The system of transliteration adopted by Gilchrist for Bengali was substantially the same as that devised by him for Hindoosthani, Persian, Arabic and Sanscrit. It was on a phonetic basis and it attempted to render by means of English spelling the *sounds* of Bengali, without any reference to the established orthography of the language, even in the case of Sanscrit words. The Roman vowels had



their *English* values. The rival system of Sir William Jones very properly adopted the Italian or Latin values of the Roman vowels and this system modified by Wilson and Hunter finally won the day. Gilchrist uses *o* for अ, the Sanscrit and Hindusthani sound of अ being regularly represented by *u*. ई is denoted by *i* and ऐ by *ee*. ऊ is represented by *oo* and औ by *oo* and *sk* is used for श, ष, स being used wherever these letters are so pronounced. The cerebrals are in italics *t d r* the *k* of the aspirate is separated from the stop letter by a bar as in Sir William Jones's system (*k̄ k̄ c̄k̄ k̄*). Gilchrist uses *k* for क, not *o*, as is done by Jones, so that with the former क is *k̄ k̄*, not *o k̄ k̄*. For ख again he never employs *o* or *α*. His system, whatever may be its faults has at least the merit of consistency.

## APPENDIX IV

(Page 237 footnote)

### EARLY CHRISTIAN PERIODICALS (BENGALI)

The *Samāchan Darpan* and the *Digdarśan* were not properly speaking, missionary papers for religious controversy was sedulously avoided. The first Christian periodical was the *Gospel Magazine* (8vo pp 1-16), English and Bengali, commenced in 1819 by the Missionaries of the London Missionary Society and continued till 1823. Then came the *Evangelist*, edited by Rev J Robinson and started in 1843 by the Baptist Association it was in existence for three years. The *Upadeśaka* was commenced in 1847 and edited by J Wenger, continued till 1857, when the editor went home, it was recommenced in 1863 after his return and ultimately ceased in 1865. The *Satyārnaba* edited by the missionaries of the Church of England, was begun in 1849 five volumes appear to have been published. The *Arunodaya*, a fortnightly journal, was started in 1856 by the Calcutta Tract Society. The first editor was Rev Lalbehari De. These are, in their chronological order, all the purely Christian periodicals, published during the first half of the century.

## APPENDIX V

### EARLY CHRISTIAN TRACTS

It is impossible, if it is at all worth while to draw up a complete list of the early Christian tracts in Bengali. A pretty fair list will be found in Murdoch *Catalogue of Christian Vernacular Literature of India* Madras 1870 pp 1-31. But this is by no means exhaustive. See also Long *Catalogue* (1855) *Return of Names and Writings* etc (1855) *Return Relating to Bengali Publications* (1859). Some of these tracts may be found in the Serampore College Library and other missionary centres. See also Blumhardt, *Catalogue of Bengali Printed Books in the British Museum* and *Catalogue of Bengali Books in the India Office*, Wenger *Catalogue of Bengali Publications* (1865) supplements Long's *Return Relating to Bengali Publications* (1859) and enumerates only those missionary publications which were printed after 1865.

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